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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

# THE CURTAIN PLAYHOUSE, 1597-99

by

(C) ALAN TAYLOR

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled

THE CURTAIN PLAYHOUSE, 1597-99

submitted by

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Date 6 May 1977

"Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita,
mi ritrovai per una selva oscura,
che la diritta via era smarrita."

To Hilary,

for her encouragement,

help, and

almost inexhaustible

patience.

"Caminante, no hay camino;
Se hace camino al andar."

ABSTRACT

The Curtain playhouse was the longest lived of all Elizabethan and Jacobean theatres, yet less is known about it than about almost any other. Shakespeare's company, the Lord Chamberlain's men, occupied the Curtain certainly for over a year, and probably for almost two, the extreme limits being September 1597 and July or August 1599. From an examination of the external evidence and an analysis of seven plays performed by the Chamberlain's men between 1597 and 1599, this thesis attempts a reconstruction of the Curtain, concentrating mainly on the stage and tiring-house facade.

Chapter 1 admits the dependency of this kind of study on the advances made in bibliographical research, and acknowledges the writer's indebtedness to the scholars who established the methodology to be employed. It justifies the study by virtue of the Curtain's central importance to the history of the Elizabethan theatre.

Chapter 2 discusses briefly the possible sites for the Curtain, outlines its long history from 1577 to about 1625, and speculates on its fate thereafter. It attempts to show that the Curtain was a thriving and typical playhouse, in which not only plays, but various kinds of entertainment, were presented.

Chapter 3 reviews the little extant evidence which bears directly on the structure of the Curtain, and shows that only two short pieces of written evidence can be regarded as reliable, neither of which tells us anything about the stage or tiring-house.

Chapter 4 summarises the evidence for the authority and dates of the seven texts to be analysed, and argues that four of the seven

were almost certainly performed at the Curtain by the Lord Chamberlain's men between 1597 and 1599, presentation of the other three at that playhouse being only probable.

Chapter 5 explains that the analysis of the texts was undertaken, with the Swan drawing in mind, to answer the question: "Could the Swan stage as shown by De Witt have accommodated the seven plays?" The results of the analysis indicate an affirmative answer.

The Conclusion shows that six researchers (Reynolds, Nagler, Harbage, Saunders, Beckerman, and King) arrived at similar conclusions in the past. The evidence suggests that the Curtain stage and tiring-house were very simple in 1597-99, possibly almost identical to those of the Swan drawing, and that they remained so for the whole of the Curtain's existence. Similar deductions about other playhouses, and the fact that the Curtain was typical, point to a strong possibility that most theatres from 1576 to 1642 were much less elaborate than many scholars had hitherto thought. The thesis ends by suggesting that the evidence from play-texts for a more elaborate theatre be subjected to a fresh examination.

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# CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

"Comparisons are odorous."

Possibly the two most notable aspects of Shakespearian studies this century have been the attempt to reconstruct an Elizabethan playhouse and the "new bibliography." The latter has afforded new insights into the conditions of the book-printing trade in Shakespeare's day, and into the methods by which his manuscripts found their way into print. Not least among the achievements of bibliographical research has been the resurrection of most of the early quartos as reliable texts. To that achievement this thesis is indebted; but its main inspiration has been the aforementioned attempt, by various scholars, to arrive at more and more accurate assessments of the physical conditions of the Elizabethan playhouses, both public and private.

Earlier this century research into the structure of the Elizabethan theatre tended to produce reconstructions which were elaborate and complex. Evidence drawn from a wide range of documents (mostly play-texts) covering an extended period of time was cited in support of such notions as "the inner stage," "the upper stage," and "the tarras" in some unspecified "Elizabethan" playhouse. One of the most elaborate of these reconstructions was that of J. C. Adams in The Globe Playhouse (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1942). Adams obviously stretched his evidence to its limits, and it may be that the extravagance of some of his theories was at least partly responsible for a new approach. From questioning the validity of

his more dubious assertions scholars turned to scrutinising other theories, not so extreme, which had previously been generally accepted. The practice of using evidence culled from almost anywhere and everywhere to rebuild a typical Elizabethan theatre (usually the Globe, for more than any other it has been that playhouse that has stirred the imagination of scholar and layman alike) was recognised to be faulty. Researchers began, instead, to work from the opposite end of the spectrum, attempting to reconstruct a particular theatre as it might have been during a fairly narrowly limited period of time. As long ago as 1923 E. K. Chambers wrote in The Elizabethan Stage: "The ideal method would have been to study the staging of each theatre separately, before coming to any conclusion as to the similarity or diversity of their arrangements."[1] But it was another seventeen years before anyone took up the suggestion. In 1940 G. F. Reynolds, who may be considered the pioneer of this method, published The Staging of Elizabethan Plays at the Red Bull Theater 1605-1625 (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, and London: Oxford University Press). Of this milestone of theatrical research Allardyce Nicoll had this to say:

> G. F. Reynolds essays a new path by confining his attention to dramas which had been written specifically for one particular theatre, the Red Bull: this leads him to interesting and even revolutionary conclusions. . . . yet his evidence is strong and, if it comes to be supported by other evidence similarly obtained, not only shall we have to look once more at the "De Witt" drawing in a new light, but also we shall be compelled to revise some of our fondest theories regarding Elizabethan staging.[2]

The kind of approach adopted by Reynolds has gained increasing momentum, and the more notable results of its application have been

embodied in print by such scholars as Beckerman, Saunders, and King.[3] It is this disciplined method that I have attempted to apply to a study of the physical conditions obtaining at the Curtain theatre between 1597 and 1599, when the Lord Chamberlain's men occupied that playhouse. The nucleus of the thesis is an analysis of the staging requirements of seven plays, four of which were certainly, and the other three probably, performed at the Curtain by the Lord Chamberlain's men. The rationale for the choice of these seven plays and the authority of each of the texts used are discussed in Chapter 3. Since so little is known about the Curtain it was considered desirable to set the study of it during 1597-99 within the wider context of its general history, especially in view of the fact that this covered a longer period of time than any other Elizabethan or Jacobean playhouse. Chapter 2 is therefore devoted to an outline of that history.

From the outset it was suspected that no startlingly new revelations about the Curtain, or the Elizabethan theatre generally, would emerge from the analysis, though it was felt that the findings might support those of Reynolds, Beckerman, Saunders, and King. That they do in general terms do this will, I hope, become evident by the end of Chapter 5, though a discussion of the implications of the results of the study for the Curtain and other early playhouses is set forth in the final chapter.

The Curtain is one of the worst documented of all Elizabethan theatres, yet its known active life spanned almost fifty years, and if any stage had a claim to be typically Elizabethan, then that stage

was the Curtain's. It therefore provides legitimate scope for speculation; but at the same time there is a paucity of information about which to speculate. Nevertheless research into this apparently unimportant theatre might yield significant results. Glynne Wickham has argued so eloquently for such research that I shall quote him at length:

> The outline of the surviving information about the Curtain confronts us with one of the most ironical paradoxes in the whole history of the Elizabethan and Jacobean drama; for if there is one single theatre that does correspond in some measure with the image that has become so deeply ingrained upon the public mind in the course of the past hundred years, of an archetypal stage and auditorium for Shakespeare's plays and those of his contemporaries, it is the Curtain: yet we know next to nothing about its stage or auditorium.

He goes on to point out the "remarkable continuity of dramatic development and stagecraft which [its] half-century of consecutive use represents," and concludes:

> If this history could be supplied in detail we should possess our surest guide not only to the transition from gamehouse to playhouse but to the physical conditions of all other Elizabethan and Jacobean theatres: for it is the Curtain, not the Globe, that truly represents this fluid and advancing tradition of English dramaturgy.[4]

It was with the hope of being able to supply a little of the missing detail that this thesis was undertaken.

## CHAPTER 2 THE CURTAIN THEATRE, 1577-?

### "And what's her history?"

Despite Glynne Wickham's assertion that beyond a few meagre facts about the Curtain, "The rest is silence,"[1] its history, like that of Viola's "sister," amounted to considerably more than a blank, as the following account will show.

The Curtain theatre derived its name from the land on which it stood. This land was known as the Curtain estate and had formerly belonged to the Priory of Holywell, dissolved in 1547. The Priory itself (#80 in Figure 1) stood on the north side of Holywell Lane, and the Curtain estate on the south side.[2] Both were outside the City walls to the north in the County of Middlesex, and the Curtain playhouse therefore, like its near neighbour the Theatre, was beyond the jurisdiction of the puritanical City fathers.

The exact extent of the estate is not known, nor can the Curtain theatre's precise location thereon be determined with any certainty. The Privy Council prohibition of 28 July 1597 (see below, p. 19 ) refers to both the Theatre and the Curtain as being "nere to Shoreditch." John Stowe, in his Survey of London, writes of them as being near the dissolved Holywell Priory, "on the Southwest side towards the field."[3] These descriptions are vague, but Stowe's implies that the playhouses were close to Finsbury Fields, on their eastern edge. Aubrey says only that the Curtain was "somewhere in the suburbes (I thinke towards Shoreditch or Clarkenwell)."[4]

Key to the section of Chassereau's survey of 1745 reproduced on the opposite page.

"80 King John's Court. Here are the remains of Priory founded for black nuns of the order of St. Benedict."

"87 New Inn Yard."

"93 Curtain Court (afterwards Gloucester Row, now Gloucester Street)."

"94 Holywell Court."

"95 The well from whence the Liberty derives its name."

Although the precise extent of the Curtain estate is not known it was probably bounded on the north by Holywell Lane, on the east by Holywell High Street (Bishopsgate Street), on the south by Hog Lane, and on the west by Curtain Ditch Side.

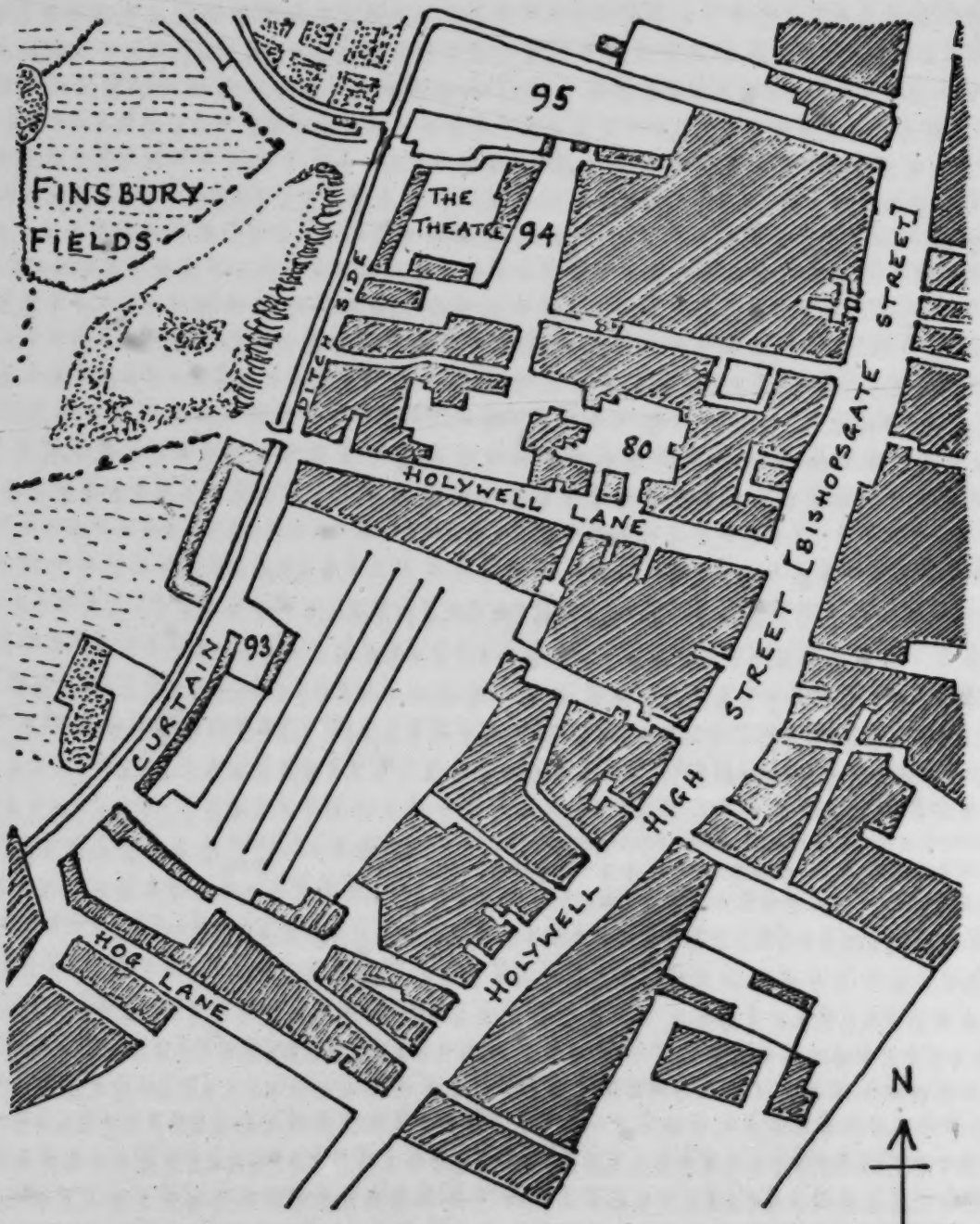


Figure 1.

The Liberty of Holywell, taken from An Actual Survey of the Parish of St. Leonard, in Shoreditch, Middlesex, taken in the year 1745, by Peter Chassereau, Surveyor.

None of this information enables us to do more than establish the general area, though attempts have been made to site the theatre more accurately. J. Q. Adams (following Halliwell-Phillipps[5]) thinks the site is probably marked by Curtain Court in Chassereau's survey of 1745 (#93 in Figure 1).[6] He bases his argument on documents relating to the sale of the Curtain estate in 1582, in which the name of one Henry Lanman appears among a list of those owning "edifices and buildings . . . erected and builded uppon the saide close called the Curtayne."[7] From records of the litigation "Burbage versus Brayne" in 1592 it is known that Henry Lanman was the proprietor of the Curtain theatre from at least as early as 1585 (cf. below, pp. 15-17). Adams reasons that it is likely that Lanman owned the theatre in 1582 (and was possibly its original owner and builder), and that the edifice that he owned in Curtain Close was the Curtain playhouse. Even if, however, we accept the implicit assumption that "Curtain Close" and "Curtain Court" are one and the same place, the argument is still not conclusive.

Other evidence points to a location further east, on the south side of Holywell Lane, more or less opposite the old priory. According to Halliwell-Phillipps there was a "Curtain House" either in or near Holywell Lane,[8] and this may have stood in Curtain Close on the site of the dismantled theatre. He also quotes the following from the register of St. Leonard's, Shoreditch, in 1619: "John Edwardes being excommunicated was buried the vij.th of June in the Kinges high waie in Halywell Lane neare the Curtayne."[9] This indicates a site on the corner of Holywell Lane and Bishopsgate Street.

Lucyle Hook argues for just such a location, "fairly near the corner of Hollowell Lane and Shoreditch, immediately across from the site of the dismantled Priory."[10] If this be correct it would explain why Thomas Platter, writing in 1599, thought of the Curtain as being in Bishopsgate (see below, p. 22). It seems unlikely that he would have confused a main highway with the open Finsbury Fields, on the edge of which Curtain Court was located.

Still more puzzling is the so-called "Ryther" map of about 1635, which shows a theatre just to the north of Bedlam (see Figure 2), much farther south and east than either of the two possible locations discussed above.[11] The greater weight of opinion is, however, in favour of the Curtain Court site, and the most recent attempt to locate the playhouse argues for this position. This attempt is by Sidney Fisher in an examination of the engraving entitled A view of the Cittye of London from the North towards the South.[12] His argument is dealt with in more detail below (see pp. 39-41). For the moment suffice it to say that his point is not proven beyond doubt, so that the exact location of the Curtain theatre remains as much a mystery as ever. All we can assert with authority is that it was in Shoreditch, near the Theatre whose site can be more accurately determined (see Figure 1), some distance south of it, and close to the eastern edge of Finsbury Fields; and like the Theatre, it was erected on leased property.

Though not as well known as the Theatre, the Curtain must have been built soon after it, if not actually at the same time. From

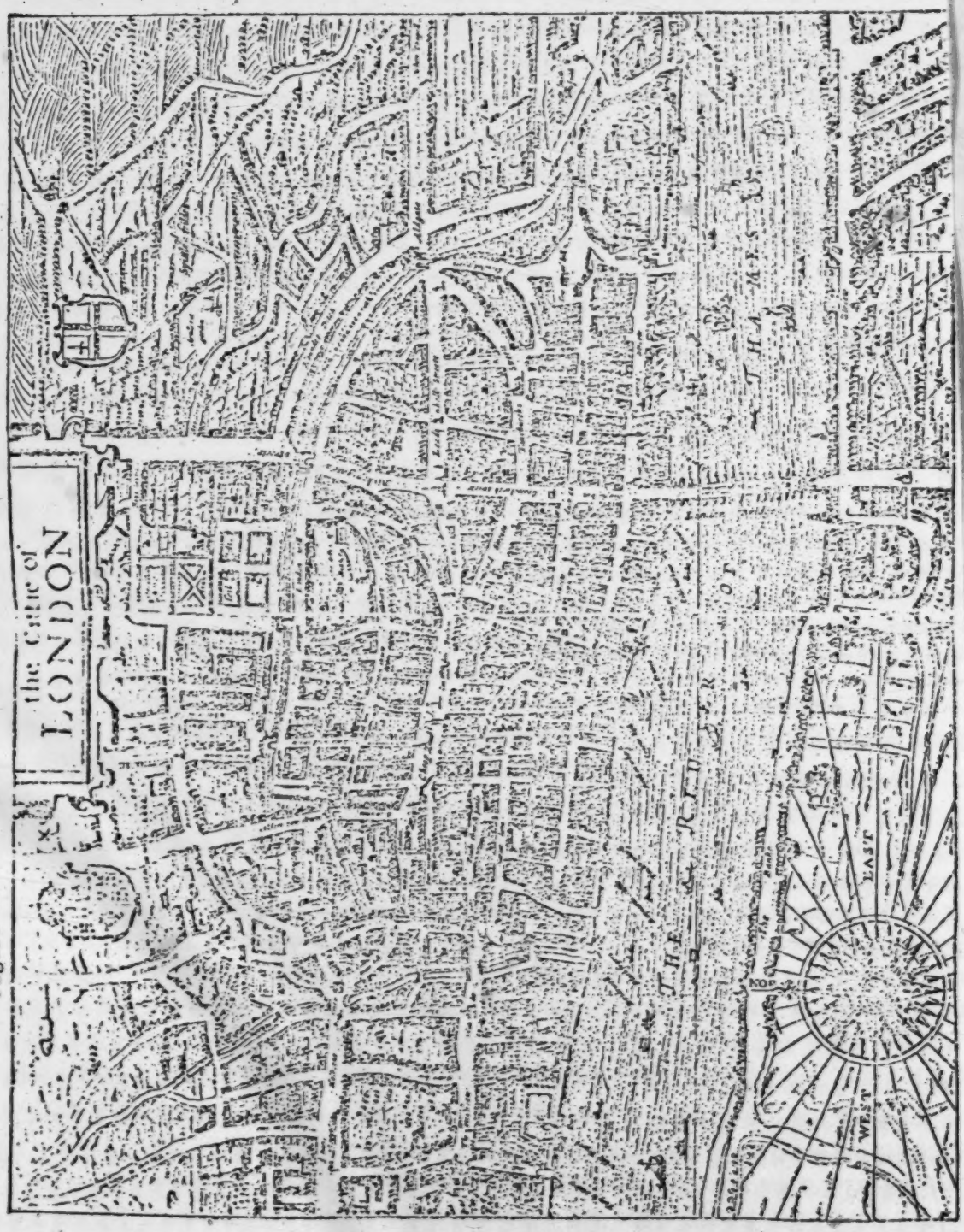


Figure 2. The "Ryther" Map of London, circa 1633.

Poor copy

contemporary references to it, it is reasonable to infer that it was a successful venture. Both theatres are the target of Puritan attacks on plays and players. The earliest extant mention of the Curtain by name appears in Northbrooke's Treatise, entered into the Stationers' Register on 2 December 1577.[13] The Treatise is in the form of a dialogue between Age and Youth. Age considers "the giftes, buildings, and maintenance of such places for players a spectacle and schoole for all wickednesse and vice to be learned in," and Youth asks him, "Do you Speak against those places also, which are made uppe and builded for such playes and enterludes, as the Theatre and Curtaine is, and other such lyke places besides?"[14] It seems reasonable to assume that it is also implicitly included in a general denunciation of theatres in a sermon delivered at Paul's Cross on 3 November 1577: "Looke but uppon the common playes in London, and see the multitude that flocketh to them and followeth them: beholde the sumptuous Theatre houses, a continuall monument of London's prodigalitie and folly."[15] It may be included too in a Privy Council minute of 1 August 1577, in which "suche as are and do use to play without the Liberties of the Citee within that Countie [Middlesex], as the theater and such like, shall forbeare any more to play untill Mighelmas be past."[16]

Probably then, by the late summer of 1577, the new playhouses had become thriving theatrical institutions; thereafter for the next ten years the Curtain, together with the Theatre, continued to bear the brunt of Puritan invective against the stage. In a sermon at Paul's Cross on 24 August 1578 John Stockwood complained of the

small number of people in church congregations, "whereas if you resorte to the Theatre, the Curtayne, and other places of Playes in the Citie, you shall on the Lords day have these places . . . so full, as possible they can throng."[17] The Curtain is mentioned again disparagingly in Newes from the North: "I call to witnesse the Theaters, Curtines, Heaving Houses, Rifling boothes, Bowling alleyes, and such places, where the time is so shamefully mispent."[18] Also in 1579 Thomas Twyne's Physic against Fortune denounces "the Curteine or Theater: which two places are well knowen to be enimies to good manners: for looke who goeth thither evyl, returneth worse."[19]

The theatre also attracted the attention of the authorities. This was usually due to one of two things--the plague, or rioting by the assembled crowds. The Privy Council inhibition of August 1577 cited above (p.11) was "for thavoiding of the sicknes likelie to happen through the heate of the weather and assemblies of the people of London to playes." There was a similar order issued on 17 April 1580 to the Middlesex Justices of the Peace "that all playes may be restrained until Michelmas,"[20] and though it mentions neither the Theatre nor Curtain by name, these were the two playhouses that came under the jurisdiction of that county. Earlier that same year Burbage and Brayne, joint owners of the Theatre, had been indicted by a Middlesex jury for bringing together on several days unlawful assemblies to watch and hear "interluda vocata playes or interludes" and thereby causing "quasi insurrexiones et diversia alia malefacta et enormia."[21] Later in 1580 there was "a certaine fraye betwene the servauntes of th'erle of Oxforde and the gentlemen of the Innes of

the Courtes" in the neighbourhood of the Theatre and Curtain.[22] We learn from a letter of the Lord Mayor to the Lord Chancellor, dated 12 April 1580, that there was "some great disorder . . . committed at the Theatre" on the previous Sunday.[23] The Privy Council restraint mentioned above (p.12) followed hard on this disturbance, and though the plague is the ostensible reason for it, we may conjecture that the "fray" was at least partly responsible. It is obvious from such documents that the Theatre and Curtain were flourishing, attracting large crowds, offending the Puritans' sense of decency and morality, and occasionally causing embarrassment to those responsible for law and order. And they continued to prosper.

In January 1583 the Puritans resumed their attack. In that month there was an accident at Paris Garden when some of the galleries of the Beargarden collapsed. John Field complained of the "distruction both of bodye and soule that many are brought unto by frequenting the Theater, the Curtin, and such like," and he hoped that like the Beargarden "the Curtin and such like . . . will likewise be cast downe by God himselfe."[24] For that event, as we shall see, he had to wait a long time.

Phillip Stubbes, also in 1583, wrote of the "flockyng and runnyng to Theaters and Curtens" which he termed "Venus pallaces."[25] The authorities were concerned too, for the Lord Mayor wrote to Sir Francis Walsingham complaining that the Privy Council had been lax in enforcing restrictions against the theatres during times of the plague:

> Among other we finde one very great and dangerous inconvenience, the assemblie of people to playes, beare bay-

> ting, fencers, and prophane spectacles at the Theatre and Curtaine and other like places, to which doe resorte great multitudes of the basist sort of people; and many enfected with sores running on them, being out of our jurisdiction . . . It availeth not to restrain them in London, unlesse the like orderes be in those places adioyning to the liberties.[26]

This letter is interesting, for the phrases "prophane spectacles" and "basist sort of people" reveal that the Common Council objected to the theatres on grounds other than simply the danger of spreading infection. It also indicates that the Theatre and Curtain were used for not only plays but other kinds of performance as well, of which fact there is ample further evidence. Stowe speaks of them as being "for Comedies & other shewes."[27] Halliwell-Phillipps quotes a series of extracts from Sloane MS. 2530 relating to fencing matches at the Theatre and Curtain.[28] To some extent this accounts for the unruly kind of audience which was, at least at times, attracted to the playhouses. A modern counterpart would be the crowds at soccer matches, which by the law of averages inevitably contain rowdy elements; and although we must make allowance for the Lord Mayor's puritanical bias, it is obvious that the clientele of the Curtain were not always on their best behaviour. It is important to remember this when in later years we find references to the low character of both the audiences and the entertainment offered at the Curtain, and are tempted to infer some kind of decline and fall during the final fifteen or so years of its life as a playhouse.

In 1584 there was serious trouble and the continued existence of the Curtain was gravely threatened. We learn from a letter of

William Fleetwood, Recorder of London, to Lord Burghley that one "Challes alias Grostock . . . very nere the Theatre or Curten . . . dyd turne upon the Too upon the belly of a prentice" sleeping on the grass. Challes then added insult to injury, calling apprentices "the skomme of the worlde." The next day the apprentices began "to make mutines and assembles, and dyd conspire to have broken the presones," but were forestalled and the ringleaders thrown into Newgate. However, two days later on the Wednesday there was more trouble when one Browne quarrelled with some apprentices at the Theatre door and wounded one of them. This time the consequences for the playhouses seemed much more serious. The Lord Mayor

> sent ij Aldermen to the Court for the suppressing and pulling downe of the Theatre and Curten. All the LL. agreed thereunto, saving my Lord Chamberlen and mr. Vizchamberlen, but we obtained a lettre to suppresse them all.[29]

Notwithstanding this order neither of the playhouses was demolished, and if they were suppressed at all it cannot have been for very long.

The company (or companies) playing at the Curtain at this time can only be guessed at. The letter from Fleetwood quoted above tells us that he "sent for the quenes players and my lo of Arundel his players" to inform them of the letter from the Privy Council, but which company was occupying which theatre we have no way of knowing. According to Fleetwood "they all willinglie obeyed the LL lres [Lords' letters],"[30] but they must have been back on the boards in less than a year. In 1585 Henry Lanman, who was then (and possibly originally; see above, p. 8) the owner of the Curtain, entered into an agreement with Burbage and Brayne, joint owners of the Theatre. Under this

agreement the Curtain, during a period of seven years, was taken as an "Esore" to the Theatre, and the profits of both houses pooled and divided equally between the two parties. This contract appears to have been faithfully kept and was still operative in 1592, though whether or not it was renewed thereafter we do not know.[31] It is an intriguing contract, for this is all the information we have concerning it. "Esore" is usually taken to mean "easer," but no one, so far as I am aware, has produced a satisfactory explanation of the term. That the Curtain was taken as the "esore" implies that it would play a subordinate role to the Theatre. If one of the two playhouses were making more profits than the other, the owner(s) of that one would lose money under this agreement. If they were both equally prosperous it is difficult to understand the point of the arrangement. Was the Theatre more profitable and Burbage willing to forgo a percentage of his receipts in exchange for a measure of control over his rival? Or did the Curtain attract a larger audience, and was Lanman content to take less money in return for Burbage's shouldering the responsibility of management? Perhaps the explanation is that the theatres were to be used alternately by the same company. This might have afforded a kind of double protection--a safeguard against competition, and possible insurance against the loss of the use of one theatre or other through suppression by the Privy Council or some accident such as that which befell the Beargarden in 1583 (see above, p. 13). But this is speculation. In our present state of knowledge it is impossible to provide a definite answer to the riddle posed by the fleeting glimpse we have of the agreement between Lanman and Burbage

and Brayne.

Whatever the truth of the matter, it is clear that both theatres resumed performances despite the Privy Council letter, though how soon afterwards is not certain. The Curtain is mentioned in Anthony Babington's Complaint, which was probably written soon after Babington's execution in 1586. Babington is made to say:

> To be a good lawier my pynde would not frame,
> I addicted was to pleasure and given so to game;
> But to the Theatre and Curtayne would often resorte
> Where I mett companyons fittinge my disporte.[32]

In 1587 an anti-theatrical harangue calls the Theatre and Curtain "the chappell adulterinum."[33] This seems to be the last of the Puritan attacks mentioning the Curtain by name for some considerable time (the next is in 1599). Why this should be so is difficult to understand, for other documents show that the Curtain continued in use though references to it become sparser. In Martins months Minde, of 1589, the pseudonymous Mar-phoreus writes that the common people are "now wearie of our stale mirth, that for a penie, may have farre better by oddes at the Theater and Curtaine, and any blind playing house everie day."[34] The next reference does not occur until 1592, though Greg, by an ingenious and complex argument, assigns a performance by Strange's men of the second part of The Seven Deadly Sins to the Curtain in 1590.[35] In 1592 the Privy Council, fearing further disturbances by apprentices following recent ones in Southwark, sent a letter to the Master of the Rolls, the main purpose of which was to require a "watch" at midsummer:

> Moreover, for avoiding of theis unlawful assemblies in those quarters, yt is thoughte meete you shall take order

> that there be noe playes used in any place neere thereaboutes, as the Theater, Curtayne, or other usuall places . . . from hence forth untill the feast of St. Michael.[36]

Nothing more is heard of the Curtain by name until 1597. It must, however, be taken as included in two accounts of London theatres by foreign visitors in 1596. Prince Lewis of Anhalt-Cothen says that "here [London] one sees four playhouses,"[37] and Johannes De Witt observes that

> Four amphitheatres are to be seen in London . . . Of these two of the more excellent are situated beyond the Thames to the south, and called, from the signs hanging [outside them] the Rose and the Swan: the two others are outside the city to the north, by the way which goes through Bishopsgate.[38]

Two of Prince Lewis's four playhouses (that is, the two De Witt says are to the north) must be the Theatre and the Curtain.

Of some significance is a letter from the Lord Mayor to the Privy Council dated 28 July 1595. The letter omits the Curtain in a context where, if it were open for performance, one would naturally have expected mention of it to occur. The letter concerns "the putting donne of the plaies at the Theater & Bankside which is a great cause of disorder in the Citie," and also speaks of "the refuse sort of evil disposed & ungodly people . . . [who] ar now retorned to their old haunt & frequent the Plaies (as their manner is) that ar daily shewed at the Theator & Bankside."[39] Thus we are faced with three important pieces of evidence concerning the period 1592-97: 1) there is no specific reference to the Curtain extant between those years; 2) the Lord Mayor's letter quoted above pointedly omits naming the Curtain in 1595; 3) 1592 is the year in which Lanman's agreement with Burbage and Brayne expired. Altogether these point

very strongly to the conclusion (tentative though it be) that during that time the Curtain was not in regular use as a playhouse, though it may have been occupied at infrequent and irregular intervals.[40]

In 1597 the Curtain faced, and survived, what was the most serious threat to its existence before 1625. Following the Isle of Dogs scandal at the Swan, the Lord Mayor wrote to the Privy Council requesting "the present staie & fynall suppression of the saide Stage playes, aswell at the Theatre, Curten, and banckside as in all other places in and about the Citie."[41] The letter is dated 28 July 1597 and the reply was forthcoming the same day:

> Her Majestie . . . hathe given direction that not onlie no plaies shalbe used within London or about the citty or in any publique place during this tyme of sommer, but that also those play houses that are erected and built only for suche purposes shalbe plucked downe, namelie the Curtayne and the Theatre nere to Shorditch or any other within that county [Middlesex] . . . and likewyse that you do send for the owners of the Curtayne Theater or anie other common playhouse and injoyne them by vertue hereof forthwith to plucke downe quite the stage, gallories and roomes that are made for people to stand in, and so to deface the same as they maie not be ymploied agayne to such use.[42]

The letters imply that the Curtain was in use at this time, though this may not necessarily have been the case. Even if it had not opened for some time, the authorities would want to ensure that all playhouses were demolished so that the actors would have no places of their own in which to perform. It is possible, on the other hand, that the Theatre was closed, and that the Lord Chamberlain's men were performing at the Curtain. The lease of the ground on which the Theatre stood had expired on 13 April 1597 and Cuthbert Burbage was having trouble renewing it.[43] In order to circumvent any problems

about access to the Theatre the company may have removed to the Curtain prior to the Privy Council order of July. In any case it is unlikely that the Theatre ever opened its doors to the public again. The Chamberlain's men toured in the provinces for the rest of the summer, and when they resumed playing in the capital it was most probably at the Curtain, and this may well have been as early as October 1597.[44] It is certain that, despite the Privy Council order of the previous July, the Curtain was again catering to the play-going public in 1598. In his Scourge of Villainy Marston refers to Romeo and Juliet in connection with "Curtain plaudities,"[45] and Skialetheia, whose reference to the "Burgonian's tragedy" indicates that it was probably written after July 1598 when the Burgundian fencer John Barrose was executed, speaks of the Theatre as deserted:

> but see yonder,
> One, like the unfrequented Theater,
> Walkes in dark silence and vast solitude,

but of the Rose and Curtain as still functioning:

> if my dispose
> Perswade me to a play, I'le to the Rose,
> Or Curtaine, one of Plautus comedies,
> Or the patheticke Spaniards tragedies.[46]

Aubrey, on the authority of J. Greenhill, says that Ben Jonson "acted and wrote, but both ill, at the Green Curtaine, a kind of nursery or obscure playhouse, somewhere in the suburbes (I thinke towards Shoreditch or Clarkenwell)."[47] This was probably in 1598, for according to the title-page of the 1616 folio of Every Man in His Humour the play must have been first performed at the Curtain,[48] and later that year Jonson was in prison for the manslaughter of Gabriel Spencer on

22 September. There is no evidence that he ever acted with the Chamberlain's men at any other time.[49] Aubrey is the only authority we have for the name of the theatre's being the "Green Curtain." It may be that this was the sign hung outside the playhouse, though in view of the derivation of its name (see above, p. 5) this seems unlikely. There may have been an actual green curtain hung in the theatre, possibly along the tiring-house wall (compare below, Chapter 5); or Aubrey may simply have been mistaken.[50]

John Stowe mentions the Curtain in the 1598 edition of his Survey of London. In the section entitled "Suburbes without the walles," he describes the environs of Norton Fallgate, the dissolved Holywell Priory, and continues:

> And neare thereunto are builded two publique houses for the acting and shewe of Comedies, Tragedies, and Histories, for recreation. Whereof the one is called the Courtein, the other the Theatre: both standing on the Southwest side towards the Field.

In the margin are the words "The Courtin, The Theatre." In the 1603 edition the two sentences referring to the theatres and the marginal note are deleted.[51] In the "Sports and Pastimes" section of the 1598 edition is this passage:

> Of late time in place of those Stage playes, hath beene used Comedies, Tragedies, Enterludes, and Histories . . . For the acting whereof certaine publike places as the Theater, the Curtine, &c., have been erected.

A marginal note accompanying this passage reads, "Theater and Curtine for Comedies & other shewes." In the 1603 edition the author deletes "as the Theater, the Curtine, &c.," but the marginal note remains.[52] Neither of these passages is altered further for the 1618 quarto or the 1633 folio editions. This evidence alone might lead us to suppose

that both theatres disappeared. The Theatre was indeed demolished between December 1598 and February 1599; but that the Curtain remained standing we know from other sources. It must have been the theatre visited by Thomas Platter sometime between 18 September and 20 October 1599. He writes: "On another occasion, I also saw after dinner a comedy, not far from our inn, in the suburb, if I remember right, in Bishopsgate."[53] It is improbable that the Curtain was in Bishopsgate, though near it (compare above, pp. 5-9). Platter's memory, as he indicates, was no doubt hazy.

Why was it that the Curtain (and, indeed, the other theatres) survived that Privy Council order of 1597? Glynne Wickham argues that when the Lords gave the order they had no intention that the playhouses (at least not all of them) should be destroyed, and that their action was taken in part to appease the Common Council of the City. He reasons that between the issuing of the command and its actual execution (if that ever came to pass) there would be a long series of legal battles. The authorities (including the Justices of Middlesex and Surrey) could not destroy private property simply on the basis of such an order, certainly not without compensation of some kind, which might take years of suits and counter-suits in various courts to settle--a fact of which the Privy Council itself must have been fully aware. They proclaimed their decision, but passed the burden of enforcing it to the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London and the Justices of the two counties.[54] Muriel Bradbrook is more charitable to the Privy Council in her explanation of the matter:

> The bark of the Elizabethan government was very much worse than its bite, especially where large numbers of

> people were involved. As the executive branch of the government was entirely without a standing army or professional police, its coercive power was by modern standards extraordinarily weak. Consequently, the acts of the privy council seem often to indicate a maximum action that the councillors hope to see approached rather than an order that they expect to find carried out. The council was given to snapping at the city fathers for their slackness in enforcing prescriptions; the city fathers would then turn and threaten the justices of the peace for Middlesex.[55]

(Miss Bradbrook's contention is supported by events of 1601; see below, p. 24.) It must also be remembered that the players had some powerful friends. The Lord Chamberlain and the Lord Admiral, for instance, were themselves members of the Privy Council, and it is difficult to believe that they would acquiesce in an action that could have disastrous results for the companies of which they were patrons.

The reasons for the Curtain's survival may be obscure, but the survival itself is evident enough. It is on record that in March 1600 one William Hawkins was charged with taking a purse and £1 6s. 6d. at the Curtain.[56] In the same year the theatre was again threatened with extinction. The Privy Council had decided to limit the number of theatres "abowtt the Cittie" to two, but granted Edward Alleyn permission to build a new one--the Fortune-- in Golding (or Golden) Lane. They explain the apparent contradiction of these actions thus:

> There Lordshippes have bin enformed by Edmond Tylney Esquire, hir Maiesties servant and Master of the Revels, that the howse now in hand to be builte by the said Edward Allen is not intended to encrease the number of the Plaiehowses, but to be in steed of an other, namelie the Curtaine, Which is either to be ruined and plucked downe or to be putt to some other good use.[57]

The two allowed houses are to be the new Fortune in Middlesex, and the Globe on the Bankside in Surrey. Apparently Alleyn had assured the Master of the Revels that the Curtain would cease to be used as a playhouse, either by being rased or converted to some other use (possibly as tenements, compare below, p. 33). This implies that he had some control over its destiny, though no other evidence in support of this conjecture has so far come to light. Rather like the Lanman-Burbage/Brayne contract of 1585-92, it hints at interesting ramifications regarding the Curtain's history which, it seems, only discovery of hitherto unknown information can clarify further.[58]

The Fortune was duly built and Henslowe moved his company to it, but the Curtain, yet again, was not "plucked down." On 10 May 1601 the Privy Council sent a letter to the Middlesex Justices ordering them to suppress a libellous play "at the Curtaine in Moorfeildes."[59] They seem to have ignored (or to have conveniently forgotten) their own explicit order of 1597, and the implicit one of 1600, that no plays at all should have been performed there--that indeed by that time the Curtain should not have been in existence as a theatre. Yet in December 1601 they were again insisting on the limitation of theatres in use to two, and blaming the Justices of Middlesex and Surrey for not enforcing their order of 1600.[60] This was in response to a letter of complaint from the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London, to whom they sent a reply on 31 December (the same day as the letter to the Surrey and Middlesex Justices), insisting that it was the two latter authorities who had been at fault and hinting that the Common Council could do more in this regard.[61] On 31 March 1602, however,

they performed a neat volte face by licensing the Boar's Head for a third company of actors, an amalgamation of Oxford's and Worcester's men. When we consider these contradictory decrees it must be admitted that Wickham's charge of duplicity on the part of the Privy Council in 1597 has some justification. It comes as little surprise, therefore, that in a draft of a royal patent for that third company issued in 1604 (by which time the said company had been renamed Queen Anne's players) they are given permission to act "w[i]thin there now usuall Howsen," the Curtain and the Boar's Head;[62] nor that in a Privy Council warrant for the resumption of plays by the King's, Queen's, and Prince's companies, dated 9 April 1604, "the Curtaine in Holywell" is again specified as one of "ther severall and usuall howses."[63] It must be remarked, in fairness to the Privy Council, that since the original licensing of the company which became the Queen's players there had been a change of monarch; but we may reasonably assume from the phrase "usual houses" that they had been performing at the Curtain since 1602. Although they had built for themselves a new playhouse--the Red Bull--which they probably moved to in 1605 or 1606, they did not altogether abandon the Curtain.[64] An entry in the Stationers' Register for 29 June 1607 reads: "A playe called 'the travailles of the Three Englishe brothers' as yt was played at the 'Curten',"[65] and the title-page of the 1607 quarto says: "As it is now play'd by her Maiesties Servants."[66] That the Curtain was still in use is also attested to by a reference in a "rare poem," The Court of Conscience by West in 1607, who tells a libertine:

> Towards the Curtaine then you must be gon,
> The garden alleyes paled on either side;

If't be too narrow walking there you slide.[67]

The Queen's men's patent of 15 April 1609 still calls the Red Bull and the Curtain their "usual houses."[68] Whether the company continued acting at the Curtain after 1609, and if so for how long, we do not know. But the theatre itself continued to draw audiences.

In 1610 it is mentioned by John Heath. He writes: "Momus would act the fooles part in a play,/ And cause he would be exquisite that way,/ Hies me to London," where he visits the Globe, the Fortune, and "then to the Curtaine, where as at the rest,/ He notes that action downe that likes him best."[69] The author of Turners Dish of Lenten Stuffe, which the Short Title Catalogue dates conjecturally in 1612,[70] speaks of "the fat fool of the Curtain,/ And the lean fool of the Bull," and refers to the Globe and Swan a couple of lines later.[71] All four theatres, it seems, were open. The Curtain is ridiculed by Wither in 1613. Of a fatuous lover he says: "His poetry is such as he can cull/ From plays he heard at Curtain or at Bull," and he comments on self-styled poets thus:

> I must confess that this bad age doth breed
> Too many that without respect presume
> This worthy title [poet] on them to assume,
> And undeserv'd; base fellowes, whom meere time
> Hath made sufficient to bring forth a Rime,
> A Curtaine Iigge, a libell, or a ballet.[72]

In August of the same year it was visited by the Venetian ambassador, Antonio Foscarini. This visit was reported in a letter to Andrea Cioli, the Secretary of State at Florence, by Antimo Galli. It gives us an interesting glimpse of the Curtain, though we must remember that the account is at least at one remove from an eye-witness report, and probably more remote than that. Foscarini went to the Curtain

incognito with one faithful servant. Galli calls it a "most disreputable house" where gentlemen do not go, but we have to bear in mind that the main purpose of his letter is to ridicule and discredit Foscarini, whom he calls "Pantalone." Foscarini, he writes, did not go into one of the little rooms, nor did he sit in one of the "degrees" (galleries), but chose to stand below among the groundlings. At the end of the play one of the actors, in his farewell speech, invited the audience to the next day's performance, and named a play. The audience, however, wanted to see a different one and began to shout, "Friars, friars." Foscarini asked his servant what they were shouting, and upon the servant's replying, "Frati, frati," threw back his cloak, began to clap his hands as the rest were doing, and shouted, "Frati, frati." The crowd thought that he was a Spaniard and made themselves so unpleasant to him (booing and hissing) that, Galli believed, he would never want to go back there again.[73]

This letter not only gives us an interesting picture of one aspect of theatrical practice,[74] but shows us also something of the quality of Curtain audiences--at least of the lower social strata of them. Galli's opinion of the Curtain fits in with some other allusions to the low quality of the entertainment offered there. In 1615 the author of This World's Folly wrote of "obscene and light Iigges, stuft with loathsome and unheard-of Ribauldry, suckt from the poysonous dugs of Sinne-sweld Theaters," of "Fortune-fatted fooles," and of "those also . . . who were wont to Curtaine over their defects with knavish conveyances."[75] (Compare above, Wither, p. 26, and below, p. 30, re jigs.)

According to the title-page of the 1615 edition of Wentworth Smith's The Hector of Germany (entered into the Stationers' Register 24 April 1615),[76] the play was performed by a "Companie of Young Men at the Red Bull and at the Curtain."[77] It is possible that the Queen's men left the Curtain in 1609 or soon afterwards, and that the kind of entertainment offered there began to deteriorate, as well as the tone of the clientele. Against this conjecture, though, we must balance the bias of Galli and the fanaticism of the author of This World's Folly; and bear in mind that we have evidence of much earlier date of the rowdy character of Curtain audiences--indeed, of theatre crowds generally (see above, pp. 12-15). It may be that the type of performance to be seen at the Curtain (and possibly all the public playhouses), whether by "reputable" companies or lesser ones of which we have no record, changed very little over the years; and that the references to "low" entertainment and spectators can be explained as the jaundiced view of self-appointed moral guardians of society or the socially and intellectually snobbish. It is more likely the latter especially who would be best able and most inclined to express their opinions in print. Nevertheless, the fact that in 1615 the Curtain was occupied by what appears to have been an amateur group suggests that it cannot have been much in demand by professional ones. It may, indeed, have been deserted for some considerable time, for there is no extant reference to it after 1615 until 1620.

In 1620 it was occupied by Prince Charles's men. Although not mentioned by name it must have been the destination in Shoreditch to which the two grooms mentioned in royal accounts were sent:

> Feb. 1620. Iohn Drew one of the Ordinary groomes of the Prince his Chamber beinge sente in his highnes service by the Comaundmt of Mr Newton . . . from the Courte at San Iames into London so far as Shoredich wth a mesuage to Roulle one of his highnes players . . . William Price One of the groomes of the Prince his Chabr beinge sent by the Comand of mr Peter Newton . . . of one message fro the Courte at whithall to the Prince his players in shorediche to warne them to attend his highnes.[78]

The editors of the Malone Society Collections from which this extract is taken add the following note:

> "Roulle" was presumably William Rowley, the dramatist, who was certainly an important member of the Duke of York's-Prince Charles (I) company from 1609 to 1619, and most probably till 1621 or later.[79]

Further evidence of Rowley's connection with the Curtain is provided by an anti-puritanical piece of 1647 (by which time the Curtain had certainly ceased to function as a theatre, even if the building still stood, which is doubtful):

> Mercurius Pragmaticus in 1647 said of Hugh Peters, the famous Independent divine, "he has a fine wit I can tell you, Sam Rowley and he were a Pylades and Orestes, when he played a woman's part at the Curtain Play-house, which is the reason his garb is so emphaticall in the Pulpit."[80]

Corroboration of the Curtain's being again in use about this time (1620-21) can be found in a slanderous poem of 1621. Speaking satirically of Barton Holyday's Technogamia, the author advises a bored member of the audience to

> fly to ye Globe or Curtaine with your trul,
> Or gather musty phrases from ye Bul,
> This was not for your dyet he [Holyday] doth bring
> What he prepared for our Platonique King.[81]

Also, in the Roxburghe Ballads there is a song entitled, "The Man in the Moon Drinks Claret. As it was lately sung at the Curtain, Holy-Well,"[82] and on 6 March 1622 the Prince's players were paid twenty

marks and given a reward of twenty marks for performing two plays on 27 December 1621, one of which was "The Man in the Moon Drinks Claret."[83] It seems reasonable to conjecture that they sang this song at the Curtain sometime during their occupancy thereof (1619-23?), though it is improbable that they would have performed a mask in a public theatre. More likely the song formed part of a jig. The jig was originally dance which was performed as a mere after-piece to the play, but eventually it developed into an entertainment in its own right.[84] (Compare the references to Curtain jigs above, pp. 26, 27.)

The Prince's men were still in residence at the Curtain in 1622, according to Malone. He says that "it appears from the office-book [now lost] of Sir Henry Herbert . . . in the year 1622, there were but five companies of comedians in London," including "the Prince's Servants, who performed then at the Curtain."[85] In Sir Henry Herbert's Office Book is the following entry for 10 June 1622: "A new Play, called, The Duche Painter and the French Branke, was allowed to be acted by the Princes Servants at the Curtayne."[86] There is a corresponding entry noted in Halliwell-Phillipps's Scrapbooks (Fortune, p. 85), from Herbert MS. 1622:

> 1622, 10 June. "10# June for allow: of a new P. conteyn: 13 sheetes 2 [pages 1/2 called the] Dutch painter & the French brank acted by the Princes players at the Curtayne —20s."[87]

The following year, however, the company had moved to the Red Bull. On 30 July 1623 Herbert licensed The Bellman of Paris for them at the latter theatre; and on 19 August of the same year, "For the Prince's Servants of the Red Bull; an Oulde Playe, called, The Peacable King;

or the Lord Mendall."[88] The Curtain was still in use, but by an unknown company:

> 1623, August. For the Company at the Curtain; a Tragedy of the Plantation of Virginia; the profaneness to be left out, otherwise not tolerated.[89]

Though neither the company nor this particular play is otherwise heard of, that the Curtain was as popular as it had ever been is attested to by Vox Graculi:

> About this time [13-21 April], new Playes will be in more request than old; and if company come currant to the Bull and the Curtaine, there will be more money gathered in one after-noone, then will be given to the Kingsland Spittle in a whole moneth.[90]

Use of the theatre, if only on an irregular basis, continued into March 1625, as indicated by a record made by Sir Henry Herbert on 9 March 1624/5, which allowed the provincial troupe of William Perry to act there for limited periods.[91] According to Malone (Variorum, III, 54, n.), shortly after the accession of Charles I it "seems to have been used only by prize-fighters." This was certainly one of the ways in which it was employed earlier in its existence, neither it nor the Theatre being used exclusively for dramatic entertainments (see above, p. 14). If, then, the Curtain was inactive from 1615 to 1619/20, it must have enjoyed a resurgence of popularity from 1619/20 to 1625. Thereafter there is no record that it was ever again used as a playhouse.

How long the actual building remained standing is not certain. It is referred to in the Middlesex County Records of 21 February 1627 —"the common shoare near the Curtain playhouse"[92] and Leslie Hotson discovered another re[illegible]e to it as late as 1660: "Mrs. Mails by

the Curtain Playhouse."[93] From this he concludes that the building survived until then, but a later find by Miss Lucyle Hook makes this deduction uncertain at best.[94] In the Calendar of Treasury Books, volume XIII, there is a warrant for the purchase of fee farm rents by one Samuel Newton, dated 14 December 1697. In the same volume, under the date 21 April 1698, there is a Treasury warrant for the sale of Fee Farm Rents to Samuel Newton and his heirs at sixteen years purchase, and the following ten pages list the properties involved. The pertinent properties appear under the rubric of Co. Middlesex, the first two lines dealing with the Curtain playhouse followed by thirteen locations in the immediate vicinity: "garden and houses called the Curtain Playhouse in Hallowell Lane in Shoreditch."[95] As both Miss Hook and Bentley point out, the term "playhouse" here is not meant literally, but serves to clarify a location.[96] The Curtain Playhouse as such must have disappeared by then, and probably before 1660, when the reference Leslie Hotson found is also to be taken as designating not a structure but an area. There is no mention of the Curtain in some manuscript notes which, according to Collier, he found in a 1631 edition of Stowe's Annals.[97] This document gives the following information, which I have summarised from the printing in Chambers: the Globe was burnt down in 1612, rebuilt in 1613, and finally pulled down on 15 April 1644 to make tenements; the Blackfriars was pulled down for the same reason on 6 August 1655; so too the Hope on 25 March 1656; the Salisbury Court, the Phoenix, and the Fortune were pulled down by soldiers in 1649.[98] If this material is genuine,[99] then the omission of the Curtain would suggest that it had

disappeared earlier or had ceased to be used as a playhouse, and was thus of no interest to whoever recorded the above information, sometime after 1656.

Support for this conjecture is to be found in Histriomastix (1633). In the "Epistle Dedicatory" Prynne gives the number of playhouses then in use as six:

> *two olde Play-houses being also lately reedified, enlarged, and one *new Theatre erected, the multitude of our London Play-haunters being so augmented now, that all the ancient Divels Chappels . . . being five in number, are not sufficient to containe their troopes; whence we see a sixth now added to them.[100]

These six "Divels Chappels," says Chambers, "are doubtless the six houses, the Blackfriars, Globe, Cockpit, Salisbury Court, Fortune, and Red Bull, which are also noted by the Restoration writers on the stage, John Downes and James Wright, as surviving up to the cataclysm of the civil wars."[101] Thomas Crosfield, in an entry in his diary for 18 July 1634, lists five companies of players in London, together with their theatres, and the Curtain is not among them.[102] From this very scant and rather negative evidence, it would seem likely that the Curtain was converted into tenements before the Civil War and thus escaped the fate other theatres suffered at the hands of the Puritans.

Bentley suggests that Christopher Beeston had a hand in its conversion to tenements, since at his death he held a lease on some property which was part of the piece of land known as "the Curtain."[103] In his will, dated 4 October 1638 and proved on 3 December, he bequeathed to his son William some freehold land and houses in St. Leonard's, Shoreditch. Leslie Hotson says:

> From a later suit in Chancery [C7 127/52 Farnham v. Beeston (1666)] I have extracted some new information concerning Christopher Beeston's holdings in Shoreditch. Besides some property in Hog Lane, Shoreditch, he owned several houses in King's Head Yard, between Hog Lane and a ten-acre plot known as "the Curtain". Katherine Crosse, who owned this large property, let a piece of it to Christopher Beeston. The Curtain estate included the site of the Curtain Playhouse . . . Beeston, as we know, acted with Queen Anne's Company at this theatre in and after 1604.[104]

Whether Beeston did control the land on which the Curtain theatre stood (or had stood), and whether that building was still standing when he died, are questions that cannot, in our present state of knowledge, be answered with any certainty. Besant states that Maitland, writing in 1772, says that "some remains of it still stood at or about that date."[105] I have been unable to track down this reference, and it could prove an important one; for if Maitland gives an indication of where the remains stood, assuming that they were really of the Curtain playhouse, it should be possible once and for all to site the theatre exactly (compare above, pp. 5-10). For the present we must leave its location indefinite, and assume that its dramatic career came to a close in, or very soon after, 1625.

From the foregoing account I would suggest the following summary history of the Curtain. From its inception in 1577 until 1585 it was a popular and prosperous new theatre in its own right. Between 1585 and 1592 it was operated under some kind of partnership arrangement with the Theatre. From 1593 to 1596 no extant reference to it occurs. (Between 1592 and 1594 the plague affected all theatres.) If there was a lull in its fortunes, it enjoyed a revival in late 1597 or early 1598 when the Lord Chamberlain's men moved to it upon resumption

of playing in the capital after the Privy Council order of July 1597. When they left (probably in the summer of 1599) it continued to be used, though by what companies we do not know. From at least 1604, and probably from 1602, it was one of the usual houses of the Queen Anne's men (as they became in 1604), and they performed there until 1609. Again it continued in use by unknown companies until at least 1615. From 1616 to 1619/20 there occurs another of those blank periods about which we know nothing; but it then emerged as the permanent home of Prince Charles's men until 1623. When they removed to the Red Bull it was occupied by obscure players until 1625, when, as far as can be ascertained, its long theatrical life came to an end. Sometime between 1625 and the outbreak of the Civil War it was probably converted into tenements, and has since disappeared into the mists of time.

When faced with the gaps in its history one can do one of three things:--conjecture that it operated normally as a theatre along lines identical, or very similar, to those of the rest of its history; postulate that its activities were much diminished, or possibly ceased altogether for a time; refuse to speculate at all. Like nature, researchers abhor a vacuum, and once or twice in the above pages I have indulged in guesswork in an attempt to explain those gaps in our knowledge of the Curtain. Such essays are more interesting, though less scholarly, than restrained silence; and I beg the reader to consider them merely as the most tentative of suggestions for future enquirers to bear in mind. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, the general history of the Curtain does on balance indicate

that it was in continuous use over forty-eight years. Whether it was ever renovated, extended, improved, or in any way altered structurally during that time we do not know. With a reconstruction of it during two brief years of its long life the remainder of this thesis is concerned.

## CHAPTER 3 THE AUDITORIUM

"Do you see nothing there?"
"Nothing at all, yet all that is I see."

Evidence for the structure of the Curtain's auditorium is very scant. Only two extant contemporary prints have any claim to show the Curtain. They are both dubious and, in any case, offer little detail. One was first brought to the notice of the English-speaking world by Leslie Hotson, and is entitled, The View of the Cittye of London from the North towards the Sowth (see Figure 3). It was found inserted into the illustrated manuscript journal of Abram Booth, an agent of the Dutch East India Company, who lived in London from 1629 to 1636. The manuscript is preserved in the library of the University of Utrecht (MS. 1198 Hist. 147). I quote at length from Hotson, according to whom this engraving gives us

> our first and only sight of the exterior of an early Elizabethan playhouse. Its round or octagonal shape, its three stories, its two flanking tower-like enclosed staircases to the galleries, all are clearly shown.
>
> But there is more. Emerging out of the ring of its roof is the "hut" over the stage, familiar to us from the drawings of the Swan and the second Globe. And surmounting the hut's gabled roof stands the lofty flagpole flying its flag. . .
>
> In spite of its small scale the engraving thus represents all the essential outward features of the Curtain Playhouse, the theatre which in Chambers's opinion, Shakespeare's company, the Lord Chamberlain's men, used exclusively for nearly two years--from October 1597, until the beginning of September 1599, when the Globe on the Bankside was ready: the theatre which stood, though long disused, into the Restoration as the oldest surviving playhouse, built when Marlowe and Shakespeare were boys.[1]

Despite this rather romantic enthusiasm, and much as one would like to believe that an authentic view of the Curtain has been dis-

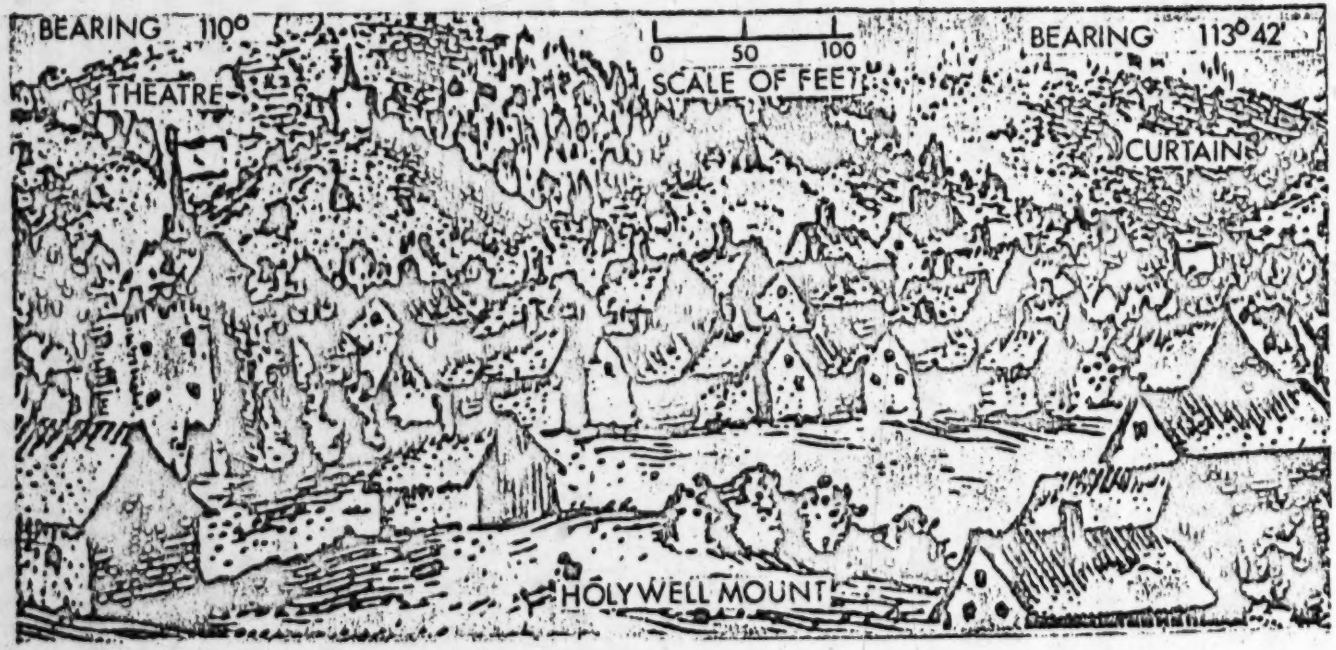


Figure 3. A section of the engraving entitled, The View of the Cittye of London from the North towards the Sowth (see above, p. 37). The identification of "Theatre," "Curtain," and "Holywell Mount" is that by Sidney Fisher, q.v. below, pp. 39-41.

covered, the drawing must, I feel, be treated more circumspectly. Its provenance is completely unknown and its date is uncertain. Darlington and Howgego do not commit themselves on it at all. They point out that St. Paul's is shown without its spire, and the view must therefore be later than 1561, noting that if Hotson's identification of the Curtain is correct, "the view is probably later than 1598."[2] But Hotson's reasoning is not logically valid. He dates the engraving about 1600 by assuming that the theatre shown is the Curtain (the Theatre having disappeared in 1599), and identifies the playhouse represented as the Curtain by virtue of the fact that the engraving is dated 1600 and therefore cannot show the Theatre. He has argued in a circle. Clearly other dates are possible.

The drawing may have been done between the erection of the Theatre in 1576 and the building of the Curtain in 1577, the dates Hotson himself accepts for these events; in which case the building would represent the Theatre. It is also feasible that the engraving is much later than 1600. Hotson himself argues (though I believe he is wrong--see above, pp. 31-32) that the Curtain was still standing as late as 1660. The view might therefore be from around 1630, assuming it to be an original insertion in the manuscript journal.

Hotson's identification was challenged in 1964 by Sidney Fisher, who argued that the playhouse shown was the Theatre, the roof, flagpole, and flag of the Curtain being visible further to the west, the main structure hidden behind houses in the foreground.[3] Fisher calculated that the drawing was made from a "point of view on the north side of the modern Pentonville Road, opposite the Metropolitan Water

Board's reservoir in Claremont Square. . . . 1200 yds due north of Leather Lane and Clerkenwell Road."[4] He then computed the bearing eastwards in degrees and minutes from due north of various buildings as they appear in the engraving and as they are, or were, in reality. The site of the Theatre can be fairly accurately pin-pointed (compare above, p. 9 and Figure 1), and Fisher calculated it to be 110° east of north in actuality, precisely where it is shown in the drawing. The Curtain, of which (according to Fisher) only the roof and flag are visible, is at 113° 42' east of north. Assuming it to have been located on the site of Curtain Court in Chassereau's survey of 1745 (see above, p. 8), Fisher calculated its actual bearing as 114° exactly, an inaccuracy on the part of the observer of only thirty-nine feet in six hundred from a distance of one and a half miles. The Tower of London is within less than one degree of where it really should be, St. Paul's is only 1° 17' out, and Westminster Abbey is precisely located. The drawing is thus fairly reliable, at least with regard to locations.[5]

All of this seems very impressive, but some aspects of the argument raise doubts. For instance, Fisher identifies the hillock in the foreground of the drawing, between "Theatre" and "Curtain," as Holywell Mount, shown in precisely that position in Chassereau's survey. This would seem to clinch his argument, except that we cannot be sure that Holywell Mount existed in 1577, or even in 1598. Besant says there was a tradition that Holywell Mount had been a plague burial ground during the sixteenth century, but that Lyssons asserts that it was a defensive breastwork thrown up by the Parliamentary

army during the Civil War.[6] If this is so, Fisher's case is considerably weakened. The impression of accuracy conveyed by the detailed calculations is also offset by some unwarranted assumptions stated as though they were established facts. For example, he says of the Curtain that "the builder was Henry Laneman" (compare above, pp. 8, 15). He also states that "the sites of both Theatre and Curtain are closely known."[7] Assertions such as these put one on one's guard; and when it is realised that in estimating the bearings of buildings Fisher took the "Theatre" as one of his reference points (Westminster Abbey being the other), he appears to be begging the whole question of the identification of the playhouse shown and his entire procedure is put in a rather different light, especially as Darlington and Howgego say that "few of the other buildings [apart from St. Paul's] can be identified except by their relative positions."[8]

Regrettably then, at the present time, we cannot be sure which of the theatres the view shows us, though it can hardly be doubted that it does show us one or the other. Even in admitting this, however, there are other observations about the drawing which must be noted. Hotson claims that it is "a skilfully executed panoramic view of London."[9] Judging from the photographic reproductions which I have seen I am inclined to disagree with this assessment. For example, the lines which seem to represent grass in the foreground are drawn right through the man and horse walking across the field. The building which Hotson identifies as the Fortune is indistinct, its perspective is puzzling, and if it is meant to be the Fortune with

only two stories completed, its height is greatly exaggerated in proportion to its width. The small scale of the engraving (the whole is only 104 centimetres by 10.2 centimetres) would make precise rendition of the physical appearance of buildings, as well as accuracy as to their location and the distances between them, difficult to attain, even for a skilled engraver. Hotson admits to being unable to tell if the "Curtain" is an octagonal or circular building (see above, p. 37). In view of the above considerations the value of the engraving is not very high. It does seem to confirm, though, what we might reasonably infer about the Theatre and Curtain from information on other theatres. If we assume, again reasonably, that these first two playhouses were similar in structure, we may state the following about the Curtain: it was a three-story building, probably made of wood, and circular or polygonal in shape (I do not see that it would make much, if any, difference to the structure of the stage and tiring-house or the ways in which plays were performed whether it were one or the other); the auditorium was surmounted by a hut-like structure with a gabled roof, to which was attached a flagpole and flag; two towers extended from the main structure, one on each side of the building, like those shown in Hollar's "Long View" of 1647 on the Globe and the Hope, probably enclosing staircases by which the audience ascended to the second and third story galleries.

The other extant contemporary print referred to above is the so-called "Ryther" map (see p. 9). This has been dated, without evidence, as 1604, but must be much later. Augustine Ryther was an English engraver who flourished from about 1572 to 1592. The first edit-

ion of the map often attributed to him was published by Cornelius Danckerts, who had a business in Amsterdam from 1631 to 1656. On internal evidence the first edition of the map can be dated about 1633. It is therefore extremely unlikely that Ryther had anything to do with it.[10] In any case, if the theatre on the map is meant to be the Curtain, it is represented by what is apparently only a cartographical symbol which cannot be used as evidence for the structure of the building.[11] Thus it adds nothing to what we have so far hypothesised.

Support for part of the hypothesis can be found in the letter of Antimo Galli to Andrea Cioli in 1613 (see above, pp. 26-27). From this we learn that the Curtain had galleries and little rooms for the audience to sit in, and that in the middle down below (that is, in the yard) stood the mob of porters and carters. Further corroboration of these facts is in Vox Graculi (see above, p. 31). The pseudonymous Jack Dawe says of the Red Bull and the Curtain that "if . . . about the houres of foure and five, it waxe cloudy, and then raine downe-right, they shall sit dryer in the Galleries, then those who are the understanding men in the yard" (sigs. I verso-$I_2$).

It may be felt that I have been over-fastidious in establishing for the auditorium of the Curtain a basic structure with which hardly anyone would quarrel. Yet since the essential methodology of this thesis is based on the argument that we must not assume theatres to have been alike unless there is definite evidence to that effect, I could hardly have done otherwise.[12] However, the main concern of the thesis is the stage and tiring-house facade of the Curtain, and the only evidence we have for these is that of the plays themselves.

Before we can examine that evidence we must establish the texts to be used, and it is to this task that I now turn.

## CHAPTER 4 THE TEXTS

### "The play's the thing . . ."

When, in July 1597, all theatres were temporarily closed by order of the Privy Council (see above, pp. 19-22), the Lord Chamberlain's men went on tour in the provinces.[1] Where the company was performing when the order was issued is not known for certain. In 1596 they must have been at the Theatre, for they performed Hamlet there. Thomas Lodge writes of "the Visard of ye ghost which cried so miserably at ye Theator, like an oister wife, Hamlet, revenge."[2] The ground lease for the Theatre, however, expired on 13 April 1597. James Burbage, who died in February of that year, had been unsuccessful in his attempts to persuade Giles Alleyn to renew it, even though a clause in the original stipulated that it could be extended by ten years beyond the initial twenty-one at the lessee's option. After James's death, Cuthbert Burbage was no more successful in this matter than his father had been; but whether the Chamberlain's men removed to the Curtain upon expiry of the lease or remained at the Theatre for a while on sufferance is not clear.[3] What does seem clear is that once the Theatre was closed in July 1597 it never again opened its doors to the public. The author of Skialetheia tell us that it was closed in 1598 (see above, p. 20), so that when the Chamberlain's men resumed playing in the capital it must have been at the Curtain, though exactly when that happened is something else that cannot be stated definitely. The Privy Council order of July 1597 had decreed that no plays at all were to be performed "in any publique place

within three myles of the citty untill Alhalloutide next,"[4] but we know that the Lord Admiral's men and Pembroke's resumed performances at the Rose on 11 October 1597. There is no clear explanation for this phenomenon (compare above, pp. 22-23), but it is apparent from Henslowe's Diary that the order in no way deterred him from planning for future productions.[5] It is likely, then, that the Lord Chamberlain's company resumed their London performances about the same time as the Lord Admiral's and Pembroke's, so that their occupancy of the Curtain can be reasonably dated from October 1597. It continued until the completion of the Globe in 1599, though this is yet another event upon which we cannot put a definite date, or even a month. We have several pieces of testimony to the fact that the company was at the Curtain during 1598 and at least part of 1599. There is evidence from: Marston's Scourge of Villainy;[6] a letter of September 1598[7] and Aubrey's observation on Jonson's acting ability,[8] combined with the inscriptions in the 1616 edition of Every Man in His Humour;[9] the fact that Robert Armin, who replaced Will Kempe in the company in 1599, calls himself, in the 1600 edition of his Fool upon Fool, "Clonnico de Curtanio Snuffe";[10] the fact that Thomas Pope, a member of the company at this time, possessed a share in the Curtain at the time of his death in 1603,[11] as did John Underwood , also a member of the Chamberlain's men (though he cannot have joined them until about 1608), when he made his will on 4 October 1624;[12] and the possibility that another member of the company at this time, Christopher Beeston, held the lease of the land upon which the Curtain theatre stood.[13]

Cuthbert Burbage began to dismantle the Theatre in December 1598

and the operation was probably completed by the end of January 1599. It may have taken about six or seven months to finish the Globe, and if so the Chamberlain's men would have left the Curtain in July or August of 1599.[14] This still leaves uncertain the identity of the playhouse for which Henry V was written, and in which it was first performed (compare below, pp. 51-52). However, we have a span of almost two years (twenty-two to twenty-three months) during which the company acted mainly, if not exclusively, at the Curtain. Seven plays which can, with at least reasonable probability, be ascribed to them during this period are: Romeo and Juliet; Henry IV, Parts 1 and 2; Henry V; Much Ado About Nothing; Mucedorus; and Every Man in His Humour. The rest of this chapter details the evidence for this statement and establishes the authority of the texts to be used, which are considered play by play in the order in which they first appeared in print, though this does not always correspond with their order of composition or performance.

Romeo and Juliet, 1597 and 1599.

The first quarto of Romeo and Juliet (1597) is undoubtedly a pirated edition, printed from a reported text.[15] It is not possible to identify with any certainty the reporter (or reporters), but it may have been an actor who had performed originally in an uncut version of the play, and subsequently in an abridged version.[16] The text becomes less and less reliable towards the end, though--as if in compensation for this--the reporter has supplied unusually descriptive stage directions, which are of considerable help in reconstructing how the play was staged. Of special importance are the type

ornaments used to mark the end of scenes. These do not appear until the end of Act III, Scene 4, but are thereafter consistent (see below, pp. 65-66).[17]

Although, therefore, the text is one of the "bad" quartos, for a study of the stage it is in some ways more valuable than the good quarto of 1599. The latter was almost certainly published with the consent of the Lord Chamberlain's men in an attempt to oust the earlier pirated edition. It was probably printed from a carelessly corrected manuscript copy,[18] and while it is therefore a more "authoritative" text, it represents a version of the play before production. $Q_1$ gives us a description of the play in performance, and therefore its stage directions will be used freely to reconstruct that performance, in conjunction with the text of $Q_2$.

The most commonly accepted date for the composition of Romeo and Juliet is 1595-96. A date as early as 1591, on the basis that the Nurse's reference to the earthquake eleven years previously is to the one of 1580 is highly unlikely in view of the fact that no reference to the play occurs before 1598. The first mention of it is in Marston's Scourge of Villainy (see above, p. 20), and has often been taken to mean that the play was first performed at the Curtain. This assumption, given the play's probable date of composition, is a dubious one. Without supporting evidence we must understand Marston to mean only that the play was staged at the Curtain in late 1597 or 1598, when the Theatre was no longer available to the Chamberlain's men. The title-page of the 1597 quarto states that the play "hath been often . . . plaid . . . by the right Honourable the L. of Huns-

don his Servants." This edition must therefore have gone to press before 17 March 1597, when George Carey, Lord Hunsdon, was appointed Lord Chamberlain, and Shakespeare's company became once again the Lord Chamberlain's men.[19] The text is thus more likely to reflect a performance at the Theatre than the Curtain; but since most scholars agree that the two theatres were probably very similar, if not identical, the bad quarto of 1597 may be regarded as corroborative evidence for staging at the Curtain. This evidence is especially significant in the light of the fact that the play as printed in $Q_2$ requires no more for its performance in the way of theatrical facilities than the corrupt version of 1597.

Mucedorus, 1598.

Judging by the number of editions that were printed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (fifteen between 1598 and 1668),[20] Mucedorus must have been a very popular play. We cannot be certain how long it had been on the boards when it made its first appearance in print, though we may postulate a composition date of 1596 or 1597. Its inclusion in the list of plays I have chosen for study is made on the grounds that it was revived by the Chamberlain's men in 1610-11, though as Chambers has pointed out, it must not be assumed that it was necessarily a Chamberlain's play originally.[21] However, plays usually belonged to companies rather than playwrights, and we may equally well argue that there is no reason to suppose that it was not a Chamberlain's play in 1598; and if it was, then it is almost certain, given its evident popularity, to have been performed at the Curtain. Against this claim, though, we must set the evidence of the title-

page inscription--"as it hath bin sundrie times plaide in the honorable Cittie of London." The Curtain was not in the City of London; but if we remember the uncertain status of the theatres following the Privy Council order of July 1597 (see above, pp. 19-21), the vague designation of the place of performance may be regarded as a cautionary measure designed to obviate any repressive action on the part of the authorities. However, in view of the uncertainties regarding the company to which the play originally belonged, the date of its composition, and the provenance of its text, we must consider the evidence derived from it as suspect, and to be used at best in a supporting capacity only.

Henry IV, Part 1, 1598.

The first quarto of Henry IV, Part 1 is the only authoritative text of the play.[22] Each subsequent quarto copies its immediate predecessor, and the First Folio copies the quarto of 1613; and each, while correcting some errors in the previous edition, introduces additional corruption into the text. The quarto of 1598 was set up from an earlier edition ($Q_0$) of which only a few leaves are extant. $Q_0$ was set from a "manuscript of high textual authority, though whether or not from a holograph is not entirely clear."[23] The $Q_1$ stage directions are suggestive of foul papers, and its text may therefore be considered as one of the more reliable of the seven.

The date of composition can be set as 1597-98 and the play, therefore, must certainly have been performed on the Curtain stage in 1598. It is good evidence for the physical conditions of that theatre.

Henry V, 1599.

Like the 1597 Romeo and Juliet, the first quarto of Henry V is a pirated text, and also, probably, a report of a version abridged for the stage. It is notoriously corrupt, and collation with the Folio text almost impossible. But since it is much closer to the period with which I am concerned than the latter, it is the text which I shall use for this study. In any case, comparison with the Folio reveals no difference in the staging requirements of any significance, with the possible exception of one stage direction (see below, p. 90).

Henry V can be more precisely dated than any of the other six plays on my list. The Chorus at the beginning of Act V of the Folio text cannot have been written earlier than 27 March 1599, or later than 28 September of the same year, for those dates mark the limits of Essex's campaign in Ireland to which the Chorus makes reference.[24] That reference is tantalising, for one feels that the date of the play's composition should be delineated by it even more accurately. Yet it eludes definitive analysis. It may be read as a confidently optimistic prophecy of Essex's success, in which case we may assign to the play a date of spring or early summer; or we may regard the words "As in good time he may" as expressive of doubt about the outcome of the campaign, and assign a date of late summer, when rumours, or even definite intelligence, of the fact that Essex was faring badly, may have reached the ears of the London public. A more precise date might allow us to say with greater confidence that the play was written with only one of the two theatres (the Curtain or the Globe) in mind. But since the Globe was already in the process of construct-

ion by March (see above, p. 47), it is likely that Shakespeare composed with both playhouses in view. Since it may have been first performed at the Curtain, consideration of its staging requirements must be included in this thesis.

Henry IV, Part 2, 1600.

The second part of Henry IV must have followed fairly closely upon Part 1, for the speech prefix "Old." for "Fal." occurs (obviously inadvertently) in the quarto of 1600 at I, ii, 119.[25] The original version was therefore penned before the offending name was changed to Falstaff because of the objections of the Cobhams. However, Part 2 is not likely to have been completed and performed prior to 25 February 1598 when Part 1 was entered into the Stationers' Register,[26] for then the title-page of the earlier would have distinguished between the two parts. 1598 is the most probable date of composition, and the play must have been written for, and first performed at, the Curtain theatre. There seem to be some echoes of it (or vice versa) in Every Man in His Humour.[27]

The quarto text is distinct from that of the First Folio. It was probably printed from an acting version, made for use in the playhouse. This is indicated by its omission of one hundred and seventy-one lines found in the Folio; by its use of the actor's name "Sincklo" for the part assigned to the "Officer" in the Folio in Act V, Scene iv; and by signs of the text being in an unedited state compared with that of the Folio (for example, in its retention at I, i, 161 of the part of Sir John Umfreville, merged in the Folio with that

of Bardolph). Moreover, when the omission of the first scene of Act II was discovered copy for it was forthcoming, and quire E was reprinted on six leaves instead of four to allow for the additional material. It was certainly printed with the full authority of the Chamberlain's men, and therefore provides evidence of the first importance for the conclusions arrived at in Chapters 5 and 6.

Much Ado About Nothing, 1600.

That the text of the quarto of Much Ado About Nothing is, like those of the two parts of Henry IV, an authoritative one is not disputed. But there is some divergence of opinion regarding the printer's copy. Hinman and Greg think the type was set from Shakespeare's foul papers in an unrevised state, while Pollard and Chambers postulate prompt-copy as the source. The main reason for the latter assumption is the substitution of the actors' names Kemp and Cowley for Dogberry and Verges in Act IV, Scene ii, in stage directions and speech prefixes. However, it is quite possible that Shakespeare himself inadvertently wrote "Kemp" and "Cowley" instead of the characters' names, since he would certainly know which actors were to fill the main parts. As Chambers himself acknowledges: "In mere stage-directions it is difficult, where there is only one text, to distinguish [the prompter's] hand from that of an author, writing, as Shakespeare wrote, in full knowledge of stage conditions."[28] Nevertheless, as mentioned above, the authority of the text is unquestioned. Hinman says that "the text proper was probably very much as Shakespeare intended it to be,"[29] and Pollard states:

> That the manuscripts of these two plays [Much Ado and

> Henry IV, 2] were obtained from the Chamberlain's men and printed with their full authority is as certain as anything can make it.[30]

The date of Much Ado is pretty closely fixed to the winter of 1598-99 by Kemp's disappearance from the Chamberlain's company early in 1599 and the absence of the play from Meres' list; and with this date the evidence of the style is consistent.[31] Thus, given its textual integrity and the narrow limits of its date, Much Ado must take its place in the forefront of the evidence for stage conditions at the Curtain.

Every Man in His Humour, 1601.

Every Man in His Humour made its first appearance in the Stationers' Register on 4 August 1600 under a "staying" order which also included Henry V and Much Ado.[32] No doubt this action had been taken by the Chamberlain's men to prevent piracy of the texts,[33] though in the case of Henry V they were unsuccessful. On 14 August 1600 Every Man in His Humour was entered to Cuthbert Burby and Walter Burre.[34] The play thus appears "to have been published with the players' consent and at their convenience."[35] The text can be regarded as authoritative, and was set up from the author's draft.[36] Although the play did not appear print until 1601 it was certainly written in 1598. The limits of the date are established by one internal and one external piece of evidence. Bobadilla is described at III, v, 16 as "that fencing Burgullian,"[37] a probable allusion to the Burgundian fencer John Barrose who was hanged for murder on 10 July 1598;[38] and a letter from Toby Mathew to Dudley Carleton dated 20 September 1598 mentions a German who lost three hundred crowns at "a new play called,

Every mans humour."[39] The date is confirmed by the folio edition of 1616. The title-page states that the play was "Acted in the yeere 1598 by the then Lord Chamberlaine his Servants," and following the text appears the statement, "This Comoedie was first Acted, in the yeere 1598. By the then L. Chamberlayne his Servants," together with a list of the "principall Comoedians." It could hardly be more certain that the play was written for, and first performed by, the Chamberlain's men at the Curtain, and the text may therefore be considered as evidence of staging of the highest importance.

The most valuable evidence I could have had for this thesis would have been the texts of several plays demonstrably and incontrovertibly printed throughout from prompt-copy which could be equally incontrovertibly shown to be the prompt-copy used at the Curtain by the Lord Chamberlain's company sometime between 1597 and 1599. It must be admitted that, as far we know, no such documents exist. Four of the plays on my list, however, come fairly close to the ideal: namely, the two parts of Henry IV, Much Ado About Nothing, and Every Man in His Humour. The first part of Henry IV must be regarded as slightly less reliable than the other three. It was probably written in 1597, and we cannot be absolutely sure that the Chamberlain's men were at the Curtain in that year. For the same reason the 1597 quarto of Romeo and Juliet, while certainly describing a public performance, cannot be accepted as prime evidence. Nor can the 1599 quarto of Henry V, for it may reflect performance at the newly-erected Globe.

Against these few cautionary notes, however, must be weighed the conclusions arrived at regarding the Curtain stage during 1597-99,

and the more far-reaching hypothesis towards which they point. But discussion of this must await its proper time.

## CHAPTER 5 STAGING

"O reason not the need."

The following account of the staging requirements of the seven plays chosen for study is based on a detailed scene-by-scene analysis of each text. The analysis is aimed at establishing details of the stage and the tiring-house facade. Four aspects of performance were selected for special attention. Three of them (the number of entrances needed for performance, and the possible use of an "above" and an "enclosure" or "discovery" space) are directly involved in a reconstruction of physical stage conditions. The fourth, the use of large properties which cannot be carried on and off by one person, are indirectly involved in that their use (or lack of it) will affect our thinking about the other three. (For example, the probable size of the tiring-house doors, the use of an enclosure space, and the likelihood of action taking place "above" in a chamber scene, may depend on whether or not large properties are employed.) Our ideas of staging may also be influenced in a more indirect way, for if we conclude that many objects mentioned only in the dialogue are not actually present on stage, we are more likely to assume that references to "above," "below," "yonder," "within," et cetera, are also not to be taken literally.

Where I have stated that only two entrances are needed for a play the assertion is supported by detailed analysis; but to supply the supporting material would require a complete written account of the exits and entrances and the action involved in every single scene.

This is obviously not feasible within the scope of this thesis, and would in any case be hardly desirable. It would be poor reading and in most instances the argument that only two entrances are necessary is not open to question. In those scenes where the existence of only two doors would seem to create problems I have indulged in more minute description of the action to explain how two (and in some cases, one) would suffice. Some other details of performance, such as the grouping of actors and the position of large properties on the stage, are discussed when they have a bearing on the main questions being considered.

I have started from the following basic assumptions. The stage consisted of a bare open platform, projecting about half way into the yard and surrounded by three tiers of galleries (compare above, pp. 42-43), and covered partly or wholly by a "shadow" or "heavens" held up by two pillars. The tiring-house facade extended the width of the stage on the same level as the first gallery; it had two entrances of sufficient width to admit onto the stage a property as large as a bed; and it was bare of scenic representation. Above it was at least one gallery for spectators (that is, the second-story gallery of the auditorium ran completely round the building). In other words I have postulated that in 1597-99 the stage and tiring-house of the Curtain were as simple as those shown in the De Witt drawing of the Swan.[1] The essential question then to be asked is: "Can the seven plays I have selected be accommodated on such a stage?"

Romeo and Juliet, 1597 and 1599.

i. Entrances.

For all scenes except one only two entrances are needed. The scene in which three may be used is II, i, the one immediately preceding the first balcony scene.[2] At the beginning of II, i, Romeo enters alone and says, "Can I go forward when my heart is here,/ Turn backe dull earth and find thy Center out" (11. 1-2). He then either hides somewhere on the stage, or exits. If he exits his lines indicate that he goes back the way he came. Yet he cannot do this, for he would run into Benvolio and Mercutio who are trying to find him and must follow him. Since he also says that he is not going forward he can hardly exit at the opposite entrance. He must leave the stage by some third exit. Benvolio and Mercutio then enter following him, search a while, and when they cannot find him, continue on their way home by leaving at the door on the side of the stage opposite to where they came in, after which Romeo emerges from his hiding-place.[3] It would thus seem that three entrances are required. But if we postulate curtains hung along the tiring-house wall, which can be parted in at least three places, Romeo can simply exit through a central gap and hide behind the curtains. The conversation of Benvolio and Mercutio certainly implies that, though they cannot see him, they know that he is close by and can probably hear them, and they talk for his benefit (II, i, 8-41). That Romeo does hear them is shown by his remark when he re-enters, "He ieasts at scarres that never felt a wound" (II, ii, 1). His hiding somewhere on stage is thus preferable

to a definite exit, and it is possible that he could use one of the stage pillars for the purpose. However, curtains hung along the entire width of the tiring-house wall can serve a number of useful functions in several scenes (see below, passim). In this scene, for example, the characters are outside and the actual doors of the tiring-house are not only unnecessary but would also certainly destroy dramatic illusion. It would be preferable if they were concealed by curtains, through a gap in which the actors would enter (compare below, pp. 78, 81, etc.).[4]

A door, in fact, is specifically necessary in only two scenes in the entire play, both set in Friar Lawrence's cell (III, iii, and IV, i). The first is when Romeo is in hiding there after having slain Tybalt. The stage directions read: "Enter Nurse and knocke" (1. 70); "They knocke" (1 73); "Slud knock" (1. 75); and "Knocke" (1. 77). Obviously one of the stage doors is being used as the door to the cell. If the other one remains visible it will be taken to represent the door of the Friar's study. The Friar tells Romeo to hide himself when the knocking is first heard, and when it persists he says, "Run to my study by and by" (1. 76). Romeo does not heed the warnings, so the door is not actually used here, but either it or some other entrance must be used at the beginning of the scene, for Lawrence calls Romeo to "Come forth thou fearfull man" (1. 1). In the later scene in the cell Juliet bids the Friar to "shut the doore" (IV, i, 44), for she does not want to be overheard.

The door could also be used to represent the Apothecarie's house, though it seems that Romeo does not knock here but merely calls. He

shouts and the Apothecarie enters asking, "Who calls so lowd?" (V, i, 57-58). The door is not really necessary.

ii. Properties.

It is a moot point in many scenes whether properties mentioned in the dialogue are on stage or not. One of the most interesting and puzzling in this respect is the scene of the supper and dance in Capulet's house (I, v). This follows immediately on the scene in which the maskers, Romeo and company, are on their way to the supper. At least it is a natural assumption that they are on their way, but their exact location is something of a mystery. They cannot be already in the house, yet if they are not then we have to assume that a scene change occurs while characters are still on the stage. At the beginning of I, v, there is the direction, "They [the maskers] march about the Stage, and Servingmen come forth with Napkins." Their marching is obviously intended to indicate movement from outside the house to within, and the entry of the servants confirms this for the audience. One servant shouts, "Away with the ioynstooles, remove the Courtcubbert, looke to the plate, good thou, save me a peece of March-pane" (ll. 6-7). Were all these things on stage, and are they now being taken off by the servingmen? I doubt it. They are not needed to show location, and they can serve no other purpose; they would be there for only a short time and would thus hardly justify the effort of setting them out. The servant's orders are to add colour to the situation, indicating what is being done in some other room of the house--the room where supper has just been eaten. This

phenomenon of a change of locale while the stage is occupied is unique to this play of the seven, and occurs again in the Lamentation scene (IV, v; see below, p. 63).

In II, i, Benvolio says of Romeo that "he ran this way and leapt this Orchard wall" (l. 5), and "he hathe hid himself among these trees" (l. 30), but I doubt that anything representing either of these was on stage. Romeo would hide behind the curtains or a stage pillar (see above, pp. 59-60). When his two friends have gone he would emerge, but now the location has changed to the "other side" of the wall, and he is in the orchard outside Juliet's window. The orchard wall, according to Juliet, is "high and hard to climb" (II, ii, 63). Any structure on stage representing the wall which did not correspond with this description would appear ridiculous and might arouse incongruous laughter. A structure which did so correspond would obstruct the view of a large section of the audience. It is better to leave it imaginary. The same applies to the trees.

A rope ladder is needed for the Nurse to carry on stage in Act III, Scene ii. The direction at the beginning of the scene reads, "Enter Nurse with cords." ($Q_1$ is more explicit with "Enter Nurse . . . with the ladder of cords in her lap," l. 1207.) Romeo had earlier instructed the Nurse to meet his man behind the Abbey wall where he would bring "cords made like a tackled stayre,/ Which to the high top-gallant of my ioy,/ Must be my convoy in the secret night" (II, iv, 201-03). Whether this ladder was ever actually used on stage, however, is open to considerable doubt (see below, p. 70).

The Potion scene (IV, iii) requires a bed for Juliet, which re-

mains in position during IV, iv, to be used again in IV, v. Even without the corroboration provided by the explicit $Q_1$ stage direction, "She fals upon her bed within the Curtaines" (l. 1800), it is evident that Juliet is on a bed, for when sent to wake her the Nurse calls her "sluggabed" (IV, v, 2). The directions of $Q_2$ leave much to be desired. After Juliet drinks the potion no exit, nor anything else, is marked for her, but we immediately have "Enter Lady of the house and Nurse" (IV, iv, 1); and though Juliet must have drunk the potion in her own room, we are now obviously in some other part of the house in the midst of the hustle and bustle of preparations for the wedding. Less than thirty lines later the Nurse is bidden to go and wake Juliet, and does so apparently without leaving the stage, though Juliet must be in her chamber. Here is the other example of that phenomenon noted above on pages 61-62. The scene changes from Juliet's chamber to some other part of the house and then back again while the stage is occupied. The bed must either be a curtained property which hides Juliet while she is "sleeping," or it must be concealed somewhere (unless we assume that it is on stage in full view of everyone but is "not seen" during the brief episode of preparation for the wedding). The $Q_1$ directions are more descriptive, but still do not tell us which of the possibilities is being realised. After Juliet has drunk the potion and fallen on her bed, there is one of the type-ornaments which indicate the end of a scene (see above, pp. 47-48, and below, pp. 65, 69). Staging suggestions for this scene are outlined below under "Discovery Space," (pp. 64-65).

The final scene is the only other one that necessitates a large

property--something to represent a tomb. Since only one entrance is required in this scene it would be possible to use the remaining stage door and the space behind it, but this would not be very satisfactory. The tomb must contain Juliet, Paris, and possibly Romeo, though he could simply slump down beside it after his dying kiss. But more important than this is the consideration that the tomb should be centrally placed, for Romeo and Juliet have been the central characters of the drama and the tomb is the focal point of all action in this last scene. The solution is to have a property (probably on wheels for ease of movement) which could be brought out and placed against the centre of the tiring-house wall. It would be painted to resemble a real tomb, and Romeo could pry off the lid with his "wrenching Iron" (V, iii, 22).[5]

Trees are mentioned in this scene too, but their presence on stage would constitute a nuisance. The stage gets quite crowded, for in addition to all the main characters the Watch and the Prince (presumably with an attendant or two) are involved; and property trees would obstruct the visibility of the tomb.

iii. Discovery Space.

A discovery (or enclosure) space would be a distinct advantage in performing this play, but is not indispensable. It would be most useful in IV, iii (the Potion scene), to conceal Juliet's bed (see above, pp. 62-63) and to represent her chamber. In the absence of such a space one of the stage doors could hold the bed, which would jut out slightly but be hidden by curtains along the tiring-house wall for

the requisite length of time. However, for the same reasons as those advanced above concerning the tomb in the final scene (see p. 64), it would be better to have the bed centrally positioned. Thus the solution is to have a curtained property which can be brought on and off stage with little difficulty. (Compare this with the scenes in Henry IV, 2, for which a litter-bed is suggested; see below, pp. 85-89.) The stage directions in $Q_1$ are ambiguous. At the end of IV, iii, we have "She fals upon her bed within the Curtaines" (l. 1800). This does not make it clear whether the curtains are independent of the bed, or are actually part of the property. After the Lamentation $Q_1$ gives us, "They all but the Nurse goe foorth, casting Rosemary on her and shutting the Curtens" (l. 1879), but this does not resolve the ambiguity. There follows what seems a purely gratuitous "comic" scene involving the Musicians and Peter, the Nurse's man. The only reason I can suggest for this bit of comedy is that it allows time for the stage hands to remove the bed, but this is not decisive evidence as to whether the bed was on the main stage or in some kind of discovery space. Nevertheless, the scene can be performed without the use of such a space.

iv. The Above.

The staging of III, v (the second balcony scene), is quite straightforward if we accept that the $Q_1$ stage directions and the type-ornaments corresponding to scene-divisions reflect an actual performance (see above, pp. 47-48). The first of the type-ornaments occurs at the end of III, v, after line 1437, just before "Enter Ro-

meo and Iuliet at the window." The second occurs after "She goeth downe from the window" (between lines 1494 and 1495), and before "Enter Iuliets Mother, Nurse." No exit is marked for Juliet at the corresponding place in $Q_2$ (III, v, 64), but it is clear from $Q_1$ that what is now normally considered as one scene was, at any rate in the performance from which the 1597 text was reported, played as two; and this simplifies the staging enormously.

The main controversy about this scene (or rather these scenes) has been over whether they were performed entirely on some kind of upper stage or shifted to the main platform for the Upbraiding scene (III, v, 64 ff.). I agree with Richard Hosley that the latter part of III, v, must have been played on the main stage.[6] It is one thing to use a balcony for a short scene in which the characters are at the edge of it, or even leaning out over it (compare II, ii; see below, p. 71). It is quite another when they must be some distance back from the edge and partially obscured from the view of at least some of the audience. This must be especially true of Juliet in III, v, when she kneels down. I can do no better than quote Hosley's own reasons for advocating that the Upbraiding be acted on the main stage:

> The clear advantage of this method of staging over continuing the action upon the upper level is that the balance of III, v (174 lines in $Q_2$) can now be performed at the front of the main stage, where the audience will have unobstructed view of the action, where the players can easily achieve and maintain audience contact, and where there will be ample space for the stage movements involved in the Upbraiding.
>
> A corollary to this advantage is the disadvantage of producing the Upbraiding upon the upper stage, where the audience would have an imperfect view of the action and where the players would not only find difficulty in maintaining audience contact but would also have inadequate space in which to move about. These practical objections

> thus support the $Q_1$ shift of action from the upper to the lower level; and if we did not have evidence for Juliet's descent in the $Q_1$ stage direction, they could be urged as an argument against use of the upper stage for the Upbraiding.[7]

Once the premise that from line 65 onwards III, v, must be played on the main stage is accepted, the problem is how to get Juliet down to the platform without some awkward hiatus in the action; and it must be admitted that Hosley does not solve this problem very effectively. Here are J. C. Adams's objections to his method of staging:

> In sum, Professor Hosley's theory that the second half of III.v, is played on the lower stage forces him (1) to reject the "at the window" of the opening direction and "from the window" of the fourth direction; (2) to interpret "then window let day in" as no more than a pretty piece of verbal scene painting; (3) to hypothecate Juliet's exit from the upper stage before the Nurse warned her; (4) to assume that the Nurse entered not to Juliet above but to the empty forestage below where she addresses her warning to the vacant air; (5) to insist that "she goeth downe from the window" refers not to the Nurse who has just entered but to a Juliet who, according to Professor Hosley, had already left the stage; (6) to alter "Enter Juliet's Mother, Nurse" to "Enter Juliet's Mother"; and (7) to postulate three different identities for the forestage in the course of thirty seconds.[8]

Three of Adams's objections (numbers 2, 5, and 6) can be answered without reference to any one particular method of staging. "Then window let day in" may very well be regarded, without corroborative evidence to the contrary, as a piece of verbal scene painting. Adams seems to imply that "verbal scene painting" is frivolous and Shakespeare would not indulge in it, though, as he must be well aware, examples of Shakespeare's doing precisely that can be quoted *ad nauseam*. "She goeth downe from the window" must surely refer to Juliet. Only she and Romeo are said to be "at the window" in the first place. There is no need for the Nurse to be there. Her warning can be

spoken from behind Juliet, after which she must surely exit again, for she re-enters later--in $Q_1$ immediately with Juliet's mother; in $Q_2$ with Capulet at III, v, 126. If the direction does refer to the Nurse, then where is the direction for Juliet to go down also, for go down she must as a result of the warning? Whichever character we understand the direction to refer to, we have to assume a mistake in $Q_1$. ($Q_2$'s directions are obviously even more deficient than $Q_1$'s throughout this scene.) I think it more reasonable to assume that the error is the omission of an "exit" for the Nurse. To assume that "Enter Iuliets Mother, Nurse" is an error also is quite reasonable. Except for lines 1496 and 1498 she has nothing to say until line 1567. Lines 1495-98 are obvious echoes of lines 239-42 (I, iii, 1-4; these lines are identical in the two quartos). The re-entry of the Nurse with Capulet is preferable to the earlier one. Her presence during the first part of the scene is superfluous and might be disconcerting to an audience.

Adams's other objections (numbers 1, 3, 4, and 7) can be met by the method of staging which I propose. I accept the "at the window" of $Q_1$, though not Adams's interpretation of it as meaning at one of the bay windows flanking the central upper stage.[9] Romeo and Juliet would be on the balcony above the tiring-house. They would, in other words, be in the second gallery where there would normally be members of the audience. A section of this gallery could represent the window quite adequately. Whether, for the performance of this play, one of the bays or "little rooms" of the gallery (see above, pp. 27, 43) were kept unoccupied we cannot know, though it is a reasonable assump-

tion.[10] It would be perfectly possible, on the other hand, to play the scene with the gallery occupied by the paying customers. Only Romeo and Juliet need be actually present in the gallery. The action would thus take up little space. The Nurse could merely poke her head round a door at the rear of the gallery, speak her warning, and immediately withdraw. (Alternatively, she could speak her lines from the orchard below the window and then run back into the house, represented by one of the tiring-house doors.) The precise timing of the Nurse's warning is not essential to my argument, though if we accept that $Q_2$ was transcribed from foul papers we must assume that Shakespeare's original intention was to have the Nurse interrupt the lovers' farewells, for the evidence of the rhyming couplet in $Q_2$ seems to me conclusive on this point.[11] The scene could equally well, however, be played with the Nurse's warning as it is in $Q_1$. In my reconstruction the Nurse would not, in any case, address her lines to "the vacant air."

The method of staging which I propose is suggested by the type-ornament which follows "She goeth downe from the window." If, when Juliet leaves the window, we assume a scene change, Adams's most serious objection is met at once. The "forestage" will take on only two identities within thirty seconds, and will change from one to the other in the normal course of a scene change. Thus III, v, becomes III, v, and vi. Once the stage is cleared by the exits of Romeo, Juliet, and the Nurse (the last either at the end of the scene as in $Q_1$ or earlier as in $Q_2$), the action resumes on the platform. The Nurse's warning thus serves a dual purpose; and it may well be that its

position in $Q_1$ is not due to a lapse of memory on the reporter's part. In addition to providing Juliet with the motivation for leaving the window, it sets the location of the following scene for the benefit of the audience, so that the entry of Juliet's mother on the main stage signals that this (and not the balcony) is now Juliet's chamber.[12] No covering speech is necessary for Juliet's descent for she comes down between scenes.

I am undecided as to Romeo's method of descent from the balcony. Earlier dialogue in the play (II, iv, 201-03; see above, p. 62) indicates that he intends to climb to Juliet's chamber by means of a rope ladder, and in III, ii, the Nurse carries it on stage. But it is not mentioned in either quarto in the second balcony scene (l. 1438 ff. III, v), which is especially surprising in the case of $Q_1$ with its otherwise very explicit directions. The direction for Romeo's descent is the same as that for Juliet's--"goeth downe." Does he actually use the rope ladder? He is supposed to use it to climb up to the balcony, but this action is not shown on stage. It is possible that, though he could not ascend without some kind of aid, he could easily descend without one.[13] Climbing a rope ladder is an awkward business. It swings away from one's feet, and it must swing freely or there will be no purchase on the rungs for the feet. We may argue that the Elizabethan actor was more physically versatile than his modern counterpart, but nevertheless ascending a rope ladder is not an everyday activity, and a gauche attempt would detract from the pathos of the scene. Romeo could go down by stairs at the rear of gallery as Juliet does, but that in its turn would detract from the

realism. But this is a detail which does not affect the essential point of the staging I have suggested, which is that the Upbraiding scene is played on the main platform.

There is still one slight problem to be solved. At what point in the $Q_2$ text does Juliet leave the window? It could be after Romeo's exit (l. 59), in which case her short soliloquy (ll. 60-64) can be spoken at the beginning of the next scene on the main stage, providing an obvious link with the previous scene. Alternatively it could be after the soliloquy, which I feel to be more appropriate. It would be more natural for her to speak these lines immediately following Romeo's departure, and then to exit herself. Her mother's first line, "Ho daughter, are you up?" is then shouted from off stage as Juliet re-enters on the platform.[14]

The staging of the first balcony scene (II, ii) poses no problems of similar complexity. Juliet is up in the second gallery (with or without members of the audience around her--compare above, pp. 68-69) and Romeo is on the platform. Although it is a long scene Juliet must lean out of her window whenever she is on stage, and the difficulties inherent in staging the Upbraiding on the balcony do not obtain here. Both actors are always in full view of the audience. No other scenes need to use any kind of upper acting area, though such use has been mooted for the Potion and Lamentation scenes.[15]

v. Conclusions.

Probably the earliest of the seven plays, Romeo and Juliet is also the most complex in its staging requirements. Its performance

would certainly be simplified by such facilities as a discovery space, a "window," and an "upper stage" above the tiring-house. But the difficulties are not insurmountable without these, and a theatre with two entrances large enough to admit a "bed" and a "tomb," and a balcony above the tiring-house for use in short scenes with few actors, could adequately accommodate the drama. The complexity is more apparent than real, and although on the surface it suggests elaborate stage requirements, the play is in fact capable of being staged in a very simple theatre. The contrast between the impression of complexity and the fact of simplicity argues that the Curtain was simple, and that Shakespeare transcended that simplicity through dramaturgical and poetic means.

Mucedorus, 1598.

i. Entrances.

Only two entrances are needed for Mucedorus, and they have only to be some entry way, not actual doors. There are no localised entrances or exits. This fact is not particularly remarkable except in one scene, when Segasto enlists the aid of Tremelio to rid himself of Mucedorus. Segasto and the Clown, Mouse, are somewhere near Tremelio's chamber, and Segasto asks Mouse to fetch Tremelio for him. One might reasonably expect this to be a "threshold" scene, with one of the stage doors representing the chamber; but I wrote "near" advisedly, for it is clear that no door is used, and that the chamber is somewhere off stage. Segasto says to the Clown, "Dost thou know Captaine Tremelioes chamber" (sig. B3).[16] This question would be super-

fluous if the door to the chamber were visible on stage. Later the Clown is bidden, not to knock, but to "Go unto him and bid him come to me" (sig. $B_3$ verso), and eventually he calls out, "Oh Captaine treble knave, captaine treble knave," upon which "Enter Tremelio" (sigs. $B_3$ verso-$B_4$). It seems clear from all this that the scene was designed to be playable on a stage (or any kind of open area) where actual doors did not exist, but only open archways, or entrances improvised by the hanging of a curtain.

ii. Properties.

The largest property absolutely necessary for this play is a bear's head. Other small objects used include swords, clubs, and a tankard. Many scenes are set in the forest or woods, and property trees could be employed, but they are not essential. No tree is ever used in the action, and location is always signified in the dialogue by reference to the surroundings, the phrase "these woods" recurring often.[17] In all scenes but one the location is generalised and is merely somewhere in the woods. In the one exception it is specified as "a faire broad branched beach/ That overshades a well" (sig. $D_1$), where Mucedorus tells Amadine to meet him. There is no indication whether or not anything on stage signified this place to the audience. The location is made sufficiently clear through the dialogue--or rather, two soliloquies: first Amadine's and then Mucedorus's, for by a mishap they fail to meet at the appointed rendezvous (sigs. $D_2$-$D_3$). In any case, exactly where they are is not important; it is what is happening that is essential, and the locale has little bear-

ing on this.

The bear's head is used twice in the play. Only the head is necessary, an entire real or costume bear being not only dispensable but quite useless without a re-writing of the opening lines of the first scene. The stage direction at the beginning of the first scene reads, "Enter Segasto running and Amadine after him, being persued with abeare [sic]" (sig. $A_3$ verso).[18] Segasto says that the only thing to do is to run, and does precisely that, leaving Amadine behind lamenting that she is doomed. However, Mucedorus saves the day, entering "like a shephearde with a sworde drawne and a beares head in his hand." An actual appearance by the "bear" would conflict with the dialogue and the stage directions. Mucedorus kills the bear off stage. If the bear were to enter and then exit, either chasing Segasto or returning whence it came, Amadine's line, "Why then I die, ah helpe me in distresse," would not make sense, since the bear would have left her unharmed and she would no longer be in danger. The audience is meant to imagine that the bear is behind Amadine and Segasto, chasing them both, and that its appearance and seizure of the abandoned princess are imminent until prevented by Mucedorus.

It is interesting that no throne is needed in this play. Although there are a king (of Arragon, Amadine's father) and courtiers, none of the scenes, apparently, is set in the court. The first time the King appears he is on his way back from a war which has no relevance whatsoever to the story. Its inclusion seems gratuitous, and it is perhaps a pretext for setting the scene outside the court. The second time the King is on stage he is being asked by Segasto to pass

judgment on Mucedorus for the "murder" of Tremelio. The setting of this scene is not made clear, though one would naturally expect it to take place in court, with the King formally seated on his throne. However, the characters enter at the start of the scene in mid-conversation, and the ceremoniousness of court is lacking (sigs. $C_2$-$C_3$). (Compare the discussion of the use of the throne in Henry IV, 1; see below, p. 79.) The third and last scene in which the King is involved is the final scene of the play, when Mucedorus's real identity is revealed and all complications are resolved. The King, of course, is the "judgment figure," and again the natural setting would be the court; but here the dialogue makes it clear that the characters are not in court. Before the entrance of Segasto, Mucedorus, and Amadine, the King is bemoaning to Collen the loss of his daughter when there is "The crie within ioie and happiness," and Collen remarks, "I heare a noyse of over-passing ioie/ Within the court" (sig. $F_2$ verso). It appears that the author has deliberately set the scene outside the court, as he did with the King's first appearance; and this fact strengthens the conviction that the other scene involving the King is not located in the court either. The reason that suggests itself is that the company did not have a throne available, in which case there is less likelihood that they used other properties which were not strictly necessary, such as trees, or something to represent a well.

iii. Discovery Space; iv. The Above.

An analysis of the action reveals that neither a Discovery Space

nor an Above is necessary for the performance of Mucedorus.

v. Conclusions.

Mucedorus makes minimal demands of the stage. Since it needs only two entrances (which do not have to be actual doors), no more than a few small properties, no discovery space, and no kind of upper acting area, it appears to be the portable play par excellence. The title-page of the 1598 quarto says that the text is "Newly set foorth, as it hath bin sundrie times plaide in the honorable Cittie of London." This may have been a deliberately vague designation of the place of performance for the players' protection (compare above, p. 50). If it were acted in London, since there were no actual playhouses in the City, it must have been performed at inns or in halls of various kinds; and its few demands on the physical structure of the stage would be a decided advantage. The 1598 edition also states that "eight persons may easily play it," and gives a list of the dramatis personae showing how parts can be doubled (sig. $A_1$ verso). It may, therefore, have been written for a small obscure company which possessed few properties and had no permanent theatre to call its own. Alternatively, if we assume that Mucedorus was originally a Chamberlain's men's play, we could postulate that it was written, after the Privy Council closed the theatres in July 1597 (see above, p. 19), especially for touring in the provinces.[19] Because the play proved popular they would naturally have performed it during their occupancy of the Curtain from 1597 to 1599.

Mucedorus seems designed for playing just about anywhere one can

hang a curtain. Unfortunately the play's very "portability" means that even if we could establish for certain that it was performed by the Lord Chamberlain's men at the Curtain in 1598 it can tell us little about the physical conditions prevailing in that theatre. Of the seven plays being considered Mucedorus is the least useful.

Henry IV, Part 1, 1598.

i. Entrances.

No more than two entrances are needed, and as in Mucedorus, they need only be entrance ways, not actual doors. This is obvious in outdoor scenes such as the robbery (II, ii), the battle (V, iii, and iv), and when Falstaff is just outside Coventry with his soldiers (IV, ii).[20] It is not so obvious, but equally true, of indoor scenes. No reference is ever made to a door which is visible on stage. In the scenes in the inn the door is manifestly somewhere off stage. When Falstaff returns to the tavern after the robbery the Vintner enters to tell Hal, "My Lord, old sir Iohn with halfe a douzen more are at the doore, shall I let them in?" (II, iv, 93). Later in the same scene the Hostess enters to announce that "there is a noble man of the court at doore would speake with you [Hal]," and Falstaff is sent out to "give him his answer" (ll. 316-27). That the inn door is meant to be some distance from the room in which Hal and his companions are, is most evident when the Sheriff arrives. If he were at a door in the tiring-house which could be seen, the entrances first of Bardolph "running," and four lines later of the Hostess obviously

very worried, to announce the fact would be superfluous; and there would hardly be time to conceal Falstaff (II, iv, 528-53). Evidently we are meant to assume what is made explicit in Henry IV, Part 2 (see below, p. 84), that the characters are in a room upstairs in the inn.

A further point about the entrance-way in this particular scene is that actual use of one of the tiring-house doors would detract from the dramatic quality of many of the exits and entrances, which require fluidity. The opening and closing of a door by the actors would interrupt this fluidity. I suggest that one of the stage doors was left open for the duration of the scene, and hidden by a curtain if it were necessary to conceal the interior of the tiring-house from the audience. Such an arrangement, or something similar, must have been employed in outdoor scenes. In the battle, for instance (V, iii, and iv), one can hardly have warriors enter the field of combat by walking through an actual door. Both stage doors (for two are obviously required when soldiers of opposite sides meet on the field) must be wide open to allow effective entries, and if necessary, veiled, at least partially, by curtains. (Whether the curtains were in front of, or behind, the doors I shall leave to a later discussion; see below, p. 81.) The same arrangement can be used for the robbery (II, ii), the highway near Coventry(IV, ii), and indeed for all the indoor scenes, for in none of them are actual doors called for.

ii. Properties.

A throne must surely be used for at least two of the scenes involving the King. It is not absolutely essential, but the scenes

would be much more effective dramatically if the King were seated in state. The two scenes are the opening one (I, i), which has an obvious ceremonial nature about it, and the one in which King Henry administers the formal rebuke to his wayward son (III, ii). The throne would serve a symbolic function in both, and in the latter the King is anxious to impress upon Hal the gravity of the situation. (In addition, the real throne and crown would contrast strongly with the cushion and joint-stool of the mock reconciliation scene (II, iv, 410, ff.; compare below.) In the King's first confrontation with the rebels-to-be (Hotspur, Worcester, and Northumberland), presumably at Windsor (I, iii), the throne could be dispensed with and its absence used to dramatic effect. When the characters enter they are already in the middle of a discussion about the prisoners Hotspur has witheld from the King (compare Mucedorus above, p. 75). The formality of the opening scene is lacking here, and haphazard grouping of the rebels around the King, and even continual movement as each tries to make some impression on him, would symbolize the turmoil imminent in his kingdom and the fact that he has lost control of them.

The only other scenes which require large properties of any kind are the first tavern scene and the one which immediately follows it (II, iv, and III, i), often indicated in modern editions as the palace of the Archdeacon of Bangor. The tavern scene almost certainly makes use of a table and stools and/or benches. At least one stool is essential. When Falstaff plays the part of the King in the mock rebuke and repentance sequence he says, "This chair shall be my state, this dagger my scepter, and this cushion my crowne," in reply to

which Hal comments, "Thy state is taken for a ioynd stoole, thy golden scepter for a leaden dagger, and thy precious rich crowne for a pittifull bald crowne" (II, iv, 415-19). All these things must be present on stage or the force of the parody is entirely lost.

There are probably more than one stool on stage, for this is a long scene (compare below, p. 81), and many of the characters have little to say, merely acting as audience to the verbal fencing-match between Hal and Falstaff. To have them standing throughout the scene might create an awkward and distracting spectacle; it is much better to have them seated in unobtrusive positions. The table is necessary for the putting-down of tankards and drinking pots.

Most of these properties could be left on stage for the ensuing scene, actors or stage-hands removing only those items suggestive of an inn. The table would be practicable for spreading out the map (III, i, 70), and stools and cushions could be used later in the scene when the lords and their ladies are listening to music and song. They would not do so standing up; and there were certainly rushes on the stage too, at least for this scene. Mortimer's wife, according to Glendower, asks him to lay himself down "on the wanton rushes" (l. 214). Hotspur says to his wife, "Come Kate, thou art perfect in lying downe, Come quick, quick, that I may lay my head in thy lap" (ll. 229-30).[21]

There is a second scene in the inn, but I incline to the opinion that for this one properties would not be brought out. It is comparatively short (a little over two hundred lines) and there is no use to which table or stools could be put. At the end of the scene Falstaff

exits calling for his breakfast (III, iii, 229). It is reasonable to assume that he is in a different part of the inn from that of the earlier scene, and to bring out properties for such a short time would be a waste of effort. When one contrasts this scene with the first one in the tavern which occupies some six hundred lines and in which definite use can be made of the properties, and one remembers that those properties can remain on stage for the scene in which the rebels divide the kingdom, a basic rule emerges for their use:--one of practicability combined with dramatic effectiveness. (Compare the discussion of the use of a throne; see above, pp. 78-79.) They are not used to signify location, which is always shown in other ways, often implicitly by the mere presence of certain characters and the events that take place. More often than not, the location of characters is of little importance anyway; it is what they are doing that matters. If a precise location needs to be indicated, it is mentioned somewhere in the dialogue.

iii. Discovery Space.

The assertion that no special discovery or enclosure space is needed for this play may at first seem surprising, as it is obvious that we must have somewhere to hide Falstaff when the Sheriff with his "most monstrous watch" is at the door (II, iv, 529 ff.). However, the scene in which this episode is included requires only one entrance (probably covered by curtains; compare above, p. 78), and the obvious place in which to conceal Falstaff is the other doorway, also covered by curtains. Hangings either in front of, or behind,

the door would serve the purpose; but since Hal refers to the "Arras" (1. 549) it would be more realistic if the curtain were hung in front of the door at some distance away from the tiring-house wall, say about two feet. Since this arrangement could serve other purposes as well, it is the one I shall tentatively postulate.[22] Indeed, if the curtain were so hung, and ran the whole width of the tiring-house wall, Falstaff need not use the doorway at all, but could be hidden anywhere behind the curtain. (For discussions of the further possibilities of this arrangement see below, pp. 93-95, 101-04, 106, 108-09.)

iv. The Above.

I noted earlier (see above, p. 78) that the first tavern scene was set upstairs in the inn. Lest there be any misunderstanding I should make it quite clear that in my opinion this scene is acted on the main platform, and not on any kind of balcony or upper stage. The scene runs for well over six hundred lines; there are at least seven characters on stage at one time; there are a table and stools which will remain on stage for the following scene, another two hundred and seventy lines or so; there must be considerable movement when Falstaff demonstrates his "olde warde" and how he fought with "eleven Buckrom men" (ii. 215-44), and when the Hostess and Bardolph come running in they need space to make effective the sudden eruption of their entrances and to communicate their haste and anxiety to the audience; and Falstaff must hide behind the arras. Any one of these considerations would alone be sufficient to disqualify an upper stage

from presentation of the scene. Together they amount to an overwhelming case for performance on the platform, where the actors can take full advantage of the space available. Since no other scenes require an upper acting area, the play can be presented in a theatre which does not possess one.

v. Conclusions.

Henry IV, Part 1 is, like Mucedorus, capable of being presented in an open space where two entrance-ways are available or can be improvised, the only additional equipment necessary being properties which can be easily carried on and off by no more than two people. Although it is a much more sophisticated play than Mucedorus, 1 Henry IV needs no elaborate theatre for its production.

Henry IV, Part 2, 1600.

i. Entrances.

As with the plays already analysed, no more than two entrances are needed for the second part of Henry IV, and except for two scenes doors are not required. The two scenes are the opening one in front of Northumberland's castle, and the one in which Hal "steals" the crown from his sleeping father (IV, v). In the opening scene Lord Bardolph enters and calls, "Who keeps the gate here, ho?" A few lines later the Porter tells him to "knock but at the gate,/ And he himself [Northumberland] will answer" (I, i, 1-6).[23] Obviously one of the stage doors will suffice for the gate. In Act IV, Scene v, the King wakes from sleep and calls his nobles from the other room.

They tell him that the Prince (Hal) was with him, and when he asks them where he is now Warwick says, "This door is open, he is gone this way" (ll. 47-55).[24]

In the tavern scene (II, iv), as in Part 1, the door at which knocking is heard is offstage. A direction reads, "Peyto knockes at doore," and the Hostess tells Francis to "look too'th doore there" (ll. 348-50), and then Peto enters. Later there is more knocking, and when Falstaff enquires what the matter is, Bardolph answers, "You must away to court sir, presently" (ll. 365-68). Since it cannot be Bardolph who has brought the news from court--he must enter with Pistol at line 107, for although no entrance is indicated for him he speaks a little later (l. 148)[25]--he must be repeating what a messenger at the door (that is, the outer door of the inn) told him. Besides, the fact that they are upstairs in the tavern is made explicit by the Drawer's announcement of Pistol's arrival: "Sir, Ancient Pistol's below and would speak with you" (ll. 67-68), and reinforced by dialogue later in the scene when Doll asks Falstaff to "thrust him [Pistol] downstairs" (l. 184) and both Bardolph and Falstaff tell Pistol, "Get you downstairs" (ll. 191, 199).

ii. Properties.

For the tavern scene in this play (II, iv) we may assume the same kind of properties as for the similar scene in part 1 of Henry IV. Indeed, we may reasonably assume identical properties and setting, for it is the same inn and the same company is performing part 2, which was written soon after part 1 (see above, p. 52). Apart

from the table and stools for II, iv, the only large piece of furniture needed is some kind of bed for the King in Act IV, Scenes iv, and v. The Arden edition has the King carried on in a chair at the beginning of Scene iv, and then moved to a bed later; but I do not think this is necessary. (This point will be discussed in detail under Discovery Space; see below, pp. 85-89.)

There is a forest scene, but property trees are not essential. The setting is clearly and deliberately specified immediately the scene opens: "Bish. What is this forest call'd?/ Hast. 'Tis Gaultree Forest" (IV, i, 1-2). If property trees were used though, they would not interfere with any action, for although a battle seems imminent, none is actually fought. The same trees, if the company had some, could be used in the scene in Shallow's orchard; though again the location is clearly signified in the dialogue. As he enters Shallow says, "Nay, you shall see my orchard, where in an arbour, we will eat a last year's pippin of mine own graffing" (V, iii, 1-2). A table and stools are used in this scene too (obviously the same ones as are used in the tavern scene), for Shallow tells his servant, "Spread, Davy, spread," and he asks his guests to sit down (ll. 8-14). No actual "arbour" is required, but if the Chamberlain's men possessed such a property they could have used it in Much Ado as well (see below, pp. 96-98).

iii. Discovery Space.

No discovery space is necessary. The only scene in which one might be used is IV, v, when Hal "steals" the crown. If one accepts

the stage directions supplied in the Arden edition (which are taken over from Sisson and Capell) the Scenes iv and v of Act IV pose some problems. At the beginning of IV, iv, the Arden Shakespeare has, "Enter the King [carried in a chair]." Later in the scene the King suffers a relapse and requests his lords, "I pray you take me up and bear me hence/ Into some other chamber" (ll. 131-32). At this point the Arden gives the direction, "They take the King up and lay him on a bed," and signals a change of scene (to IV, v), and presumably a change of location, for we are to imagine that the bed is in the "other chamber" to which the King asked to be taken. If we accept this theory of the action the question that immediately presents itself is, "Where is the bed located on the stage?" We can assume some kind of simultaneous staging, with the bed visible throughout Scene iv. This is feasible but unsatisfactory. We can, alternatively, postulate a discovery space in which the bed is concealed until it is needed. But such a space has not been required in the other plays so far analysed. Yet we cannot here use one of the stage doors to hide the bed, since they are both required as entrances. When Hal "steals" the crown he must leave by a different way from the other nobles, because Gloucester says, "He came not through the chamber where we stay'd" (IV, v, 56). That a bed is used in this scene can hardly be denied. The King says, "Set me the crown upon my pillow here" (IV, v, 5), and later, "Come hither, Harry, sit thou by my bed" (IV, v, 181). Thus it would appear that we are forced to either accept simultaneous staging or admit the existence at the Curtain of a discovery space large enough to conceal a bed.

In fact, we are forced to do neither. The solution to the problem lies in the fact that a careful reading of the text reveals that the stage directions supplied by the Arden edition are not only unnecessary but wrong, and depend on a misapprehension about the action following the King's request to be taken to "some other chamber" and for music to be played softly to help to soothe him. It is at this point that Warwick says, "Call for the music in the other room" (IV, v, 4). Obviously the nobles are intending to move the King, who by now is unconscious, or nearly so. But then Prince Hal enters. He enquires how his father is, and after some conversation Warwick says, "Not so much noise, my lords. Sweet Prince, speak low;/ The King your father is dispos'd to sleep," and Clarence adds, "Let us withdraw into the other room." Hal, however, says he will stay and watch by the King. He then remains as all the other lords go out (IV, v, 5-19).

What is clear from the text is that the nobles intend to move the King, but after they are interrupted by the arrival of Prince Hal, leave him where he is, and instead go out themselves. Not only does this simplify the staging; it is also a sensible procedure in "realistic" terms, for since the King is asleep, it is best not to disturb him by movement. Thus the scenes numbered by the Arden edition as IV, iv, and v, should be printed as one continuous scene, IV, iv.

A corollary to the above reading of the text is that as the King is so clearly on a bed in the latter part of the scene he must be on a bed right from the beginning. Instead of being "carried in a chair" he is "carried on a bed." The bed would not be full-size, of

course, but some kind of litter.

The relatively complex staging entailed in acceptance of the Arden stage directions depends on another misreading too. At the end of IV, v, the King asks Warwick, "Doth any name particular belong/ Unto the lodging where I first did swoon?" Warwick replies that it is called Jerusalem, the King asks to be taken to that chamber so that he may die there, and the lords obviously take him up and carry him off (11. 232-40). At the beginning of IV, iv, the Arden gives the location as "[The Jerusalem Chamber]," following the Cambridge edition. Thus at the end of IV, v, we are to imagine that the King is being taken back to the room in which IV, iv, opened. Yet this too is unnecessary and entails the assumption that the King's swoon at IV, iv, 110-11, is the first one he has suffered--an unreasonable inference if he is carried on in a bed (or even a chair) at the beginning of the scene. We can more reasonably postulate that his first swoon was some time ago and the Jerusalem Chamber in some other part of the palace entirely.

I have undertaken the above discussion in some detail, giving the whole of the reasoning against a change of scene and a movement of the King from chair to bed, because otherwise there is a powerful argument for the use of a discovery space, and a large one at that, which evidence in the other plays does not support. Nor do I feel that I am wrenching the text to conform to preconceived ideas of the theatre. It is editors who supply stage directions not in the original text who are distorting the action and necessitating complex staging not envisaged by the author.[26]

iv. The Above.

No special upper-level acting area is required for the play. If one existed it would no doubt have been used in the opening scene before the gate of Northumberland's castle. The Porter answers Lord Bardolph's shout with "What shal I say you are?" and when Lord Bardolph gives his identity he says, "His lordship is walk'd forth into orchard./ Please it your honour knock but at the gate,/ And he himself will answer" (I, i, 1-6). No entrance or exit is marked for the Porter. The obvious place for him to be is on the "walls" of the castle, but no special upper stage is needed for this. He can easily use the balcony (the second story gallery) without disturbing the audience. He needs only a small space at the front of it and is there for only a short time. (Compare above, pp. 69, 71; and below, p. 92.)

The scene upstairs in the inn (II, iv), as in part 1, must be acted on the platform. Several characters are involved and there is plenty of action. Pistol swaggers about brandishing his sword, and eventually provokes Falstaff into drawing his weapon and forcing him out of the room. The Prince and Poins must watch unobserved and make comments on Falstaff and Doll which can be heard by the audience. A table and stools are needed. The scene cannot be played anywhere but on the main stage.

v. Conclusions.

If the above argument regarding the King's bed in IV, iv-v, hold good, then the second part of Henry IV needs nothing more elaborate for its performance than the first part. The simplicity of our the-

oretical stage remains intact.

Henry V, 1600.

i. Entrances.

No more than two entrances are required, and in only two scenes is an entrance localised. The first is II, i, in front of the tavern where Falstaff is dying; the second is before the city gates at Harfleur (III, iii).[27] In the former the door can be imagined as somewhere off stage, and even for the latter this method would work. Although the First Folio has "Enter the King and all his Traine before the Gates" at the beginning of the scene (which may in any case be an authorial stage direction only), the 1600 quarto has simply "Enter the King and his Lords alarum." Henry asks whether the town is going to surrender or not, and then "Enter Governour" (sig. $C_3$, ll. 7-19). The audience does not really need to see the gates at all. However, if double stage doors are used to represent the gates (assuming that they did not contain a wicket), the Governor could enter by opening one of them just enough to come through, and after his submission speech they would be thrown wide open.

Some evidence that there were indeed only two entrances on the stage where Henry V was first performed is contained in the $Q_1$ stage direction for the beginning of the final scene. It reads: "Enter at one doore, the King of England and his Lords. And at the other doore, the King of France, [et cetera]" (V, ii; sig. $F_4$ verso, ll. 30-32). In the First Folio "at the other doore" has been changed to "At another . . ." Such evidence, however, is not conclusive.

ii. Properties.

A "tunne of treasure" (sig. $A_4$ verso, l. 10)--that is, a chest containing tennis balls--is needed for the opening scene. Apart from this not very large item, the only property required which cannot be carried by one person is a throne. One must be used in I, i, when Henry is giving audience to the French ambassadors. It may also be on stage for the first scene involving the French King (II, iv), but thereafter is not required. It could be dispensed with even in these scenes, but its presence would add to the dramatic effect and the atmosphere of formality (compare above, pp. 78-79, 81). One of the Bishops says to Henry, "God and his Angels guard your sacred throne,/And make you long become it" (sig. $A_2$, ll. 7-8). The reference to the throne may, of course, be merely figurative, but the benediction would carry more conviction with the throne actually present.

Tents are not necessary for the several scenes set in the camp of one or other of the combatants.[28] We know that they were used in other plays, and were indeed present on the Curtain stage during an unidentified play in 1599.[29] But in Henry V they are not needed to show location, nor for any enclosure or discovery; and it is certain that no scene could be played within one.

Nothing else is required. $Q_1$ does not even call for the scaling ladders that are indicated in the First Folio at the beginning of III, i, the siege of Harfleur--indeed, in $Q_1$ this entire scene is missing--and even in the later version they are not actually put to use, but merely carried "over the stage," presumably to add some colour to the fiction of the siege.

iii. Discovery Space.

No scenes in this play require the use of any kind of discovery or enclosure space, large or small.

iv. The Above.

The only scene in which advantage can be taken of an upper-level acting area is the surrender of Harfleur (III, iii). A reasonable place for the Governor to enter is on the walls of the city, to parley with Henry, but this would be superfluous (compare above, p. 90). The Arden edition indicates use of the balcony here with the stage direction, "Some citizens on the walls above the gates." Nothing of the kind is mentioned in either the quarto or First Folio texts, and it seems utterly gratuitous, as even the Arden editor himself is aware, for in a footnote to the entrance of the Governor some lines later he writes:

> Editors have omitted the F stage direction [i.e. "Enter the Governour," as also in the quarto]. What happens is surely that the Governor comes through the wicket accompanied by a few attendants and, offering the keys of the town to Henry, makes his submission. There is no need for the Governor to be on the walls in person, though he could of course move down during Henry's speech (p. 68, n.).

If there is no need for the Governor (the only inhabitant of Harfleur who speaks) to be on the walls, there is even less need for the presence of anyone else. The only objection is that Henry's speech would be made to no one visible on stage, but I do not think this unacceptable to an audience. Even if the Governor were to enter above, no special upper stage would be necessary; he could use the gallery

above the tiring-house without having to displace members of the audience (compare above, pp. 69, 71, 89).

v. Conclusions.

In both the $Q_1$ and First Folio versions, Henry V is a very easy play to present. From the point of view of this thesis the only significant difference between the two texts is the stage direction at the beginning of V, ii (see above, p. 90), where the Folio possibly indicates the existence of more than two stage doors. Second only to Mucedorus, Henry V makes the fewest demands on the stage structure and the use of properties.

Much Ado About Nothing, 1600.

i. Entrances.

Once again it must be repeated that only two entrances are needed; but a phenomenon that first became apparent to me during the analysis of Every Man in His Humour (see below, pp. 101-04) manifests itself in this play too. It concerns those scenes that are obviously set within a particular house, in this case Leonato's. Briefly it is that often one entrance would not only suffice but would actually be preferable to two. Usually the indoor scenes are localised no more precisely than "somewhere" in the house, and the argument that one entrance would be preferable depends on a judgment concerning the assumptions an audience would make about the use of two. Such a judgment must necessarily be subjective, but not for that reason alone invalid. As one example of the phenomenon, I cite first the

dance scene (II, i), and my argument will entail a rather detailed account of the action.

At the beginning of the scene Leonato, his wife and daughter, Beatrice his niece, and a kinsman enter. Later the "revellers" come in, from the same way since they have all been at supper. They dance and then all go out except John, Borachio, and Claudio. A short while later John and Borachio exit, and after a brief soliloquy by Claudio, Benedick comes back to see what has detained him. Claudio is upset by what John and Borachio have told him and desires to be left alone. Since Benedick will not leave, Claudio says he himself will, and does so. About half a minute later the Prince, Hero, Leonato, John, Borachio, and Conrade re-enter, also looking for Claudio (II, i, 69-232).[30] If two entrances are used, Claudio must go out of the one that was not used by everyone else, for the group that return after he leaves have not seen him. However, he re-enters shortly afterwards with Beatrice, who was also part of the group that left after the dance. Whichever entrance these two use, it will, I submit, seem rather strange to the audience that they have encountered one another off stage. At the end of the scene the Prince says to Leonato, Hero, and Claudio, "Goe in with mee, and I will tell you my drift" (II, i, 398-99). The door they then use will acquire the status of "in," implying that the other is "out." The answer is to have one entrance only, and what the audience will then be made to understand is that once a character leaves through this one "general" exit the choices open to him of where he may go are, to all intents and purposes, infinite. However, the use of only one of the stage doors will not solve the problem satisfactorily. It will create too

great an impression of characters going off in one definite direction, and will give a lopsided effect to the staging of the scene. The solution is to have a central entrance.

I began this chapter with the assumption that the theatre had no more than two entrances, the two stage doors in the tiring-house wall, as shown in the Swan drawing. So far I have produced no evidence to contradict that hypothesis, nor do I intend to alter the theory now. A central entrance would be effected by concealing both doors with curtains, leaving a gap at the middle of the tiring-house facade. (I have already suggested a similar arrangement--but without a central gap--for those scenes needing two entrances, but not requiring the use of the doors as doors; see above, p. 78.) Characters would then exit at the central gap. Such a way in and out would, I maintain, have a psychological effect on an audience different from, and more acceptable than, the use of either or both of the side entrances. In scenes that are short, however, or that have few entrances and exits which do not require that some characters "miss" each other off stage and that others "meet," use of only one stage door would be quite acceptable.

ii. Properties.

There is no evidence for the use of any large properties such as thrones or tables in this play. The penultimate scene (V, iii) must use something to represent Leonato's monument, but unlike the tomb in Romeo and Juliet (see above, p. 64), it need only be a facade.[31] Construction of a special property monument would hardly be justified, though a two-dimensional representation could be built easily and

cheaply, and set up in front of one of the stage doors, as only one entrance is required for this very short scene.

We have now to consider the problem of the two scenes in the orchard, with its accompanying arbour. Were there on stage any trees and/or anything to represent the arbour? One minor piece of evidence which seems to me to point away from the use of property trees is the fact that the author has taken pains to make very explicit the location of both scenes (compare above, 2 Henry IV, p. 85). At the beginning of II, iii, Shakespeare employs means which would probably pass unnoticed by a theatre audience, but whose artificiality becomes apparent when one is studying the play. The scene, in which Benedick is tricked into believing that Beatrice is in love with him, opens thus:

> Bene. Boy.
> Boy Signior.
> Bene. In my chamber window lies a booke, bring it hither to me in the orchard.
> Boy I am hear already sir. exit.
> (II, iii, 1-5).

Although the scene runs for more than two hundred lines the boy does not return. It is clear that Benedick's order is merely a device by which the dramatist can make known to the audience the location of the scene. A similar technique is used in the following scene in which Beatrice is tricked in the same way into thinking that Benedick is in love with her. Hero is given these lines:

> Good Margaret runne thee to the parlour,
> There shalt thou find my cosin Beatrice,
> Proposing with the prince and Claudio,
> Whisper her eare and tell her I and Ursley,
> Walde in the orchard, and our whole discourse
> Is all of her (III, i, 1-6).

If property trees were being used, their being left on stage would show the audience that this scene too was set in the orchard. The author would not need to repeat the location in the dialogue. But the evidence is not conclusive; he might do so anyway.[32]

Unfortunately the same inconclusive kind of argument applies to the arbour, where first Benedick, and then Beatrice, conceal themselves. It is variously referred to as an "arbour" (II, iii, 37), a "pleached bowre" (III, i, 7), and a "woodbine coverture" (III, i, 30). The scene could easily be acted without any kind of property on stage at all. It is clear from the dialogue that in both scenes the "hidden" characters can actually be seen by at least one of the others, though he himself is confident of total concealment.

There is one minor but interesting fact which might point to the use of some kind of structure for the arbour. It is that Shakespeare has set the scenes back to back, even though it would have been dramatically more convincing to separate them one from the other. The trickery is rather contrived and to play the scenes consecutively tends to emphasise the artificiality of the plot. If, however, some fairly large property representing the arbour were set up on the stage for the one scene, it would preferable to play the second orchard scene immediately afterwards to avoid the double labour of carrying the "arbour" off and back on again later (compare above, pp. 80-81). Admittedly the evidence is circumstancial, but the fore-going argument explains a slip (albeit a slight one) in dramatic technique.

In the scene in which Borachio and Conrade are apprehended by the Watch, Borachio says to Conrade, "Stand thee close then under

this penthouse, for it drissels rain" (III, iii. 111-12). The obvious meaning of "penthouse" here is a "sloping roof or ledge placed against the wall of a building, or over a door or window, for shelter from the weather" (OED). A property is hardly essential for performance of the scene, and I am inclined to think that the penthouse was imaginary. The whole scene must be artificially staged in any case, for there would be no attempt to simulate rain, and the action takes place at night. It is the darkness that conceals the Watch from the two conspirators, not any physical obstruction. There was, however, a bench on stage for this scene, for one Watchman says, "Well masters, we heare our charge, let us goe sitte here uppon the church bench till twoo, and then all to bed" (ll. 90-92). I imagine the bench downstage to one side, and Borachio and Conrade would stand close to the tiring-house wall as though under the "penthouse."

iii. Discovery Space.

Much Ado does not require the use of any kind of discovery or enclosure space.

iv. The Above.

No use is made of any kind of upper acting area in this play, but there is one rather interesting piece of negative evidence concerning the "above." The section of the plot involving the deception of Claudio into believing that Hero is a "scarlet woman" hinges on Borachio's talking to Margaret at Hero's chamber window. Borachio's initial plan was actually to enter the room--"Go but with me and you shall see her chamber window entred, even the night before her wed-

ding day" (III, ii, 115-17). But from subsequent scenes it is clear that all the observers saw was Borachio talking to a girl they took to be Hero--"she leanes me out at her mistris chamber window, bids me a thousand times good night" (Borachio, III, iii, 156-57); "What man was he talkt with you yesternight,/ Out at your window betwixt twelve and one?" (Claudio, IV, i, 84-85); "My selfe, my brother, and this grieved Counte/ Did see her, heare her, at that howre last night,/ Talke with a ruffian at her chamber window" (the Prince, IV, i, 90-92). It would be natural for Hero's chamber window to be on the second floor (that is, "above"), and Borachio's entering it would pose obvious staging problems. Compare this with the situation in Romeo and Juliet, Act III, Scene v (the second balcony scene). The ascent by ladder to Juliet's chamber is mentioned specifically in the dialogue in II, v, and the rope ladder is brought on stage in III, ii; but we never see Romeo actually make the ascent, though we do see him and Juliet "at the window," and, probably, see him descend from it (see above, p. 70, note). It is reasonable to conclude that while an actor might climb down from the second gallery with comparative ease in full view of the audience, his climbing up to it was another matter entirely, and raised obstacles too difficult for the actors to overcome. The author could, however, have shown Borachio talking to Margaret, yet he chose instead to simply tell us about it afterwards (compare again Romeo and Juliet, II, ii; see above, p. 70). Why was such a scene omitted? It is, after all, crucial to the plot. We cannot reason from this that there was no above at all to be used, for evidence from Romeo and Juliet belies the argument; but the omission from Much Ado of a scene which could have been very effective

dramatically implies a deliberate policy of avoiding action on an upper level.

v. Conclusions.

As will be clear from the preceding analysis, Much Ado affords no evidence which will allow us to elaborate on the simple picture of the Curtain theatre that has been painted so far. However, the avoidance by the author of a scene which would necessitate use of an upper-level acting area allows some scope for speculation which will be made use of in the final chapter.

Every Man in His Humour, 1601.

i. Entrances.

Two entrances will suffice for the perfotmance of this play, and in only three scenes would the use of an actual door make much sense (see below, pp. 104-05). There occur in this play more examples of those scenes in which one entrance would be preferable to two (compare Much Ado above, pp. 93-95). The opening scene is one such example. It is a threshold scene. In the first few lines Musco is ordered by his master Lorenzo Senior to "call up my son Lorenzo," and Musco exits to carry out the command. Some dozen lines later Stephano enters, having come to see his cousin Lorenzo Junior (though he politely says that he has come to visit his uncle). He asks, "How doeth my cousin, uncle?" and Lorenzo Senior replies, "Oh well, well, goe in and see" (I, 1, 25-27).[33] Stephano eventually does so, after further conversation with his uncle, and after a Servingman has

entered with a letter. Now if we assume the use of two entrances Lorenzo Senior and Musco will come on stage through one of them (let us say the right one), and then Musco will exit through the same one. Stephano will enter from the left. This will impress upon the audience that the right door is to "within" and the left one to "without"--an impression which will be strengthened when the Servingman enters from the left, when Stephano later exits right (that is, "within") seeking his cousin, and when the Servingman also exits right, going "in" with Musco. But this impression will not accord with the dialogue towards the end of the scene, when Lorenzo Senior calls Musco to ask, "What is the fellow gone that brought this letter?" and Musco replies, "Yes sir, a prettie while since" (I, i, 188-89). If the stage door left is to "without" how has the Servingman "gone" without crossing the stage?

The location of the following scene is left very vague. After the stage has been cleared at the end of I, i, Lorenzo Junior enters with Musco. They are surely not in Lorenzo Junior's room, for when Stephano enters later he asks Musco if he has seen the Servingman who brought the letter "here" (I, ii, 14); and he later remarks to Lorenzo, "I have beene all about to seeke you" (ll. 68-69). The first place he would have looked, especially as Lorenzo Senior had said that his son was probably still in bed, would have been Lorenzo Junior's chamber. They may be "elsewhere" in the house, but the most logical assumption is that the scene is located in the same place as the first one. Thus Stephano has somehow missed seeing Lorenzo Junior "within," and not having found him, has returned to his starting

point. He has also been looking for the Servingman just as unsuccessfully. Musco tells him that the fellow has gone, and he replies, "Gone? Which way? when went he? how long since?" (11. 18-19). Again the use of two entrances is difficult to reconcile with all of this, for the response to Stephano's question is that there is only one way the Servingman could have gone, through the left stage door.

Admittedly the Servingman could leave the house by a notional "back door" located somewhere off stage. This is imaginatively possible; but if the audience has seen him arrive through a door which so obviously leads "without," they would expect to see him leave the same way. The fact that they did not might not disturb them unduly, but a centralised general exit/entrance would circumvent any problem. The evidence here is not overwhelming, but when combined with that from other scenes is of sufficient weight, I think, to carry the point.

With regard to the suggested central entrance I should like to discuss one more scene from this play, for it may be argued that no Elizabethan audience (or a modern one for that matter) would be paying close enough attention to particular entrances and exits to notice discrepancies. In Act IV, Scene iii, Biancha is tricked into thinking her husband has gone to Cob's house for not entirely respectable purposes. Thorello has gone out calling, "Where is Cob? now: Cob?" and Biancha remarks, "Hees ever calling for Cob, I wonder how he imployes Cob soe" (11. 80-81). Prospero immediately plays upon her suspicion and hints that Cob's is a bawdy-house which her husband visits frequently, implying that he has gone there now. Biancha

promptly resolves to follow him and catch him in flagrante delicto:

> Never sayd you truer then that brother? Pizo fetch your cloke, and goe with me, ile after him presently: I would to Christ I could take him there I fayth.
> Exeunt Pizo and Biancha (ll. 90-92).

Approximately one page of conversation later Thorello re-enters with Dr. Clement and asks, "How: is my wife gone foorth, where is she sister?" (l. 124). If again we assume two entrances we shall have some difficulty accounting for the goings-out and comings-in. Since Biancha comments on Thorello's exit it is reasonable to assume that she sees him leave. (If she does not, and there are two ways he could have gone, it is strange that she does not ascertain which he took before deciding to follow him.) So when she leaves it will be disconcerting if she does not take the same way out as he did. But it will be equally disconcerting if she does, for his having missed her on his way back in will not be convincing. Connected to this line of reasoning is the natural inference that Thorello goes looking for Cob within the house. It would hardly suit his dignity and social status to go and seek for him through the streets; he would send a servant to do that. But if of two entrances Thorello has used the one that leads within the house and Biancha has seen him go, she will hardly believe Prospero's lie; nor would it be possible for Thorello to have met Dr. Clement, who has only just arrived at the house, since the latter should have come in through the other door. (Again it must be admitted that an off-stage "back door" is feasible, and Biancha could assume that Thorello has left that way; but is it likely that a visitor such as Dr. Clement would arrive so?) There are so many conflicts inherent in the use of two entrances that the only way out of

the dilemma is to have one entrance/exit, beyond which, in the audience's imagination, are several other ways in and out of the house.[34] The precise location within the house is not designated, and it bears repeating here (compare above, pp. 73, 81) that it is what is happening that matters, not where, and the place is adequately communicated by references in the dialogue, if it is not sufficiently clear from the identity of the characters on stage.

The three scenes in which the use of an actual door is probable are all threshold scenes outside Cob's house. At the end of the second of these scenes (III, v) the door is locked, and is still locked at the beginning of the third (V, i). Of course, the door could be completely imaginary, but since I am not denying the existence of stage doors, I must assume that they were used when it was reasonable to use them. This assumption finds support in the following piece of dialogue from the beginning of III, v:

> Enter Cob, to him Tib.
> Cob. What Tib, Tib, I say.
> Tib. How now, what cuckold is that knockes so hard? Oh husband ist you, whats the newes?
> Cob. Nay you have stonnd me I fayth? you h[a]ve given me a knocke on the forehead, will sticke by me: cuckold? Swoundes cuckolde? (ll. 1-6).

It may be argued that Cob's "stonnd" is to be taken figuratively, referring only to the implication that he is a cuckold. But it would make for more interesting action if Tib, angered by the loud knocking, quickly opened the stage door outwards and struck Cob on the head. If no stage door were used the knocking too would have to be imaginary, and the direction "Claps to the doore" in V, i (l. 13) would be utterly redundant.

At the end of III, v, Cob commands Tib, "Get you in, and locke the doore I charge you, let no body into you" (ll. 23-24). Tib obeys her husband, for at the beginning of V, i, the door is still locked and Tib is very reluctant to open it to the persistent knocking of Lorenzo Senior, and later Pizo and Biancha. The latter comments, "Why woman, grieves it you to ope your doore?" (l. 20).

In I, iii, no knocking is actually indicated by the text. Matheo calls, and Cob comes out to him. But since it is fairly certain that a door is used in the two later threshold scenes, it is unreasonable to suggest that it was not used in the earlier one. In the intervening scenes, however, the door would lose any localisation it had gained. Since it is not needed for any other scenes it would, in any case, probably be concealed by a curtain.

ii. Properties.

The only properties of any appreciable size that are needed are a bench, a stool, and a chair. The bench and stool are both used in the latter part of I, iii, located in the room in Cob's house in which Bobadilla sleeps. This scene is a continuation of the one outside Cob's house, and though there is clearly a change of location, no scene division is shown in the text. (The staging is discussed in more detail below, pp. 108-09.) Cob has told Matheo:

> Well sir, though he lie not on my bed, he lies on my bench, and't please you to go up sir, you shall find him with two cushions under his head, and his cloake wrapte about him (ll. 37-40).

Matheo enters the house through the localised stage door (see above, pp. 104-05), and when Cob leaves the stage we have the direction,

"Bobadilla discovers himself: on a bench" (1. 81). When Matheo enters Bobadilla asks him to sit down, and some eight lines later orders the hostess (Tib) to bring "a stoole here for this gentleman." Seven lines afterwards he repeats his invitation to Matheo to sit down. Obviously the stool was not originally on stage, and Bobadilla did not realise at first that there was nowhere for Matheo to sit. Although no exits or entrances are marked for Tib, she must bring the stool on and then leave again.[35]

The chair is used in the final scene (V, iii) by Dr. Clement, who is the judgment figure, both in terms of the play's structure and in his position as a justice. At the start of the scene he is attempting to untangle the cross-accusations of Thorello, Biancha, Lorenzo Senior, and Tib. They all enter in mid-conversation and Clement says, "Nay but stay, stay give me leave; my chayre sirha?" and his chair is presumably brought on by his servant(s). It may be already on stage and be simply brought forward, but I think the former possibility more likely. It is probably no ordinary chair, but something similar to a throne or state. This would suit with his official position as a justice and his symbolic function as resolver of the difficulties that have arisen during the course of the play. The chair would either be placed on a dais or platform of some kind, or would incorporate as part of its structure a couple of steps. (I favour the latter as it simplifies the task of setting up the chair.) This theory about the Doctor's chair is supported by dialogue later in the scene. Clement has been told that Matheo is an author and promptly offers to compete with him in making verses extempore, rat-

tling off a quatrain immediately. Prospero remarks, "Oh he writes not in that height of stile," and Clement responds, "No: weele come a steppe or two lower then" (ll. 245-57). Of course, this may simply be metaphor; but the staging would more interesting if, in addition to the figurative meaning of the lines, Clement were in a chair from which he could, and would, step down.[36]

Some smaller properties are used. In the final scene, for instance, Clement brandishes a sword at one point, and at another armour is brought on for him to don, though it is soon taken away again. He orders his servants to burn Matheo's verses, which they do on stage. They must have had some kind of receptacle to do this in or the Curtain might not have lasted until 1625. In I, iii, Bobadilla and Matheo make use of bedstaffs in a practice fencing bout, and Bobadilla orders the hostess to take away the "bason" (the jordan? Compare above, p. 52, note). But none of these tells us anything about the design of the stage.

iii. Discovery Space.

Only one discovery is effected in this play--that of Bobadilla in I, iii. Matheo comes to Cob's house looking for Bobadilla and is told that he is above within--"and't please you to go up sir" (ll. 38-39; compare above, p. 105)--and exits through the door that represents Cob's house. After a short soliloquy Cob exits at the other side of the stage, going off to carry his first "turn" of water, and a stage direction then tells us that Bobadilla discovers himself "on a bench."

This, however, requires no special discovery space. Bobadilla can be seated on a bench at the centre of the tiring-house wall, concealed by the curtain which has proved so useful in other scenes (see above, pp. 78, 81-82, 95, 100-04). When the stage is cleared by Cob's exit he simply draws aside the curtain and we are then "upstairs" in Cob's house.

iv. The Above.

The scene I have just been discussing in connection with the possible existence of a discovery space is the only one in the play which might have been acted on some kind of upper level. However, the reconstruction of its staging which I have described will make it evident that in my opinion it was performed on the main stage. There is no indication in the stage directions that any kind of "above" was used, and the action that takes place during the scene makes its staging on a balcony very unlikely. During the first part of the conversation between Matheo and Bobadilla the latter must be putting on his boots (and possibly completing his attire in other ways, for he has just woken up). Matheo's remark, "That boote becomes your legge passing well sir, me thinks" (ll. 146-47), can only make sense, coming as it does abruptly in the middle of an invitation to Bobadilla to visit his study, if the latter has just donned at least one of his boots and is, in all probability, admiring it himself. Since he would be doing this seated on his bench, the action would be lost to at least some of the audience if the scene were on a balcony. Later in the scene the two indulge in a little fencing practice with bed-

staffs--action that requires scope for movement. And Bobadilla's "self-discovery" would hardly be effective if he were "above." Although the scene is located upstairs in Cob's house, it must have been played on the platform.

v. Conclusions.

It will have become apparent by now that, although some of the scenes of this play are complex in their entrances and exits and their reliance on chance meetings off stage, the work can be performed on the kind of stage which has served for the other six. The complications are contained in the plot and do not need corresponding complications in the structure of the theatre in order to make them realisable on stage.

I have omitted from the above account two pieces of evidence which do not fit into any of my four categories (Entrances, Properties, Discovery Space, and The Above), but which point to the existence on the Curtain stage of pillars (that is, columns to support the stage cover or "heavens"). In Much Ado Benedick says to Claudio, "Ho now you strike like a blindman, twas the boy that stole your meate, and youle beate the post" (II, i, 210-11). In Every Man in His Humour, Cob, having left Matheo, Prospero, Lorenzo Junior, and Bobadilla in Thorello's house to inform the jealous Thorello that company has arrived in his absence, replies to the latter's anxious questions concerning his wife's behaviour: "God's my judge, I saw no body to be kist, unlesse they would have kist the post, in the middle of the warehouse; for there I left them all, at their Tabacco with a poxe"

(III, iii, 35-37). Both of these references to a post may, however, be purely figurative.

In the preceding analyses of the seven plays I have confined my attention mainly to what may be considered problem scenes--that is, scenes whose presentation on the kind of stage I described as my starting point (see above, p. 58) might have been objected to as impossible. It was found, however, that they cause no insurmountable difficulties. The scenes which I have not discussed in detail (the majority) contain nothing which may be mooted as incapable of performance on the stage shown in the Swan drawing, and their analysis here would have been superfluous. Let me repeat, though, that the chapter is based on a careful examination of all the scenes in all of the plays.

## CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

"Cudgel thy brains no more about it."

Before setting forth my own conclusions regarding the Curtain theatre in 1597-99, I should like to return to the four scholars mentioned in Chapter 1 (see above, pp. 2-3), who have used the same methodology in studying other playhouses. I shall deal with their work in chronological order, and quote some passages that are relevant to my own study.

Writing in 1940, G. F. Reynolds (The Staging of Elizabethan Plays at the Red Bull Theater 1605-1625) has this to say of the balcony:

> Inspection of the references to the balcony shows, first, that it is never used by itself, but always in connection with the stage below (p. 105);

and this of entrances: "Proof that the Red Bull had at least three doors leading from the tiring-house to the stage is not as plentiful as one might expect" (p. 109). Summarising his findings he writes:

> An affirmative conclusion of considerable importance is that the Red Bull plays, in spite of their use of spectacle, could be given on a stage structurally like that of the Swan, with the single important addition of a third stage door. . . . . .
> . . . . . .
> Although many realistic details were emphasized in the presentation, the basic principles were scarcely realism at all, but ease and speed and clarity (pp. 188-89).

In 1960 J. W. Saunders made this significant point:

> Neither Shakespeare nor any other Globe dramatist is likely to have written for his company a text which required substantial modification when it was taken to the Blackfriars or, at short notice, to Court or on tour; acting texts were omnibus texts, suitable in the main for all occasions.[1]

In the same work he states that we should look for minima and simplicity (p. 238), that the first Globe had only two doors, and that "in several plays a simple traverse across the rear of the Platform will suffice as concealment, for, say, an eavesdropper" (p. 254).

Bernard Beckerman, in Shakespeare at the Globe (New York: Macmillan, 1962), came to these conclusions:

> Based solely on the evidence of the Globe plays, what then is the picture of the Globe stage? The principal part of the stage was a large rectangular platform upon which rested two pillars. At the rear of the platform two doors and a curtained recess between them provided access to the stage. The recess, which was an integral part of the tiring house, had to accommodate less than half a dozen people. Above the recess and/or doors was an upper level principally required where characters related themselves to others below. Altogether it was a theater that presented itself as a show place rather than as an imitation of London (p. 106).

In his study of plays presented at the Phoenix in Drury Lane T. J. King concludes that of the texts analysed half could have been acted on a bare stage with two entrance doors through which large properties were brought on or set forth as needed; and for the rest requiring a discovery space and an acting area above, the company may have used the gallery, if the auditorium were so equipped, and if not, they probably set up a temporary booth similar to that shown in Hodges's illustrations of Renaissance stages.[2] In a further study published in 1971--Shakespearean Staging, 1599-1642 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press)--he makes the following comment:

> During the period 1599-1642 the royal and courtly influence on the drama increased and . . . a social cleavage developed in the London audiences. . . . Although these two kinds of playhouse [public and private] differed in outward appearance, analysis of 276 plays probably first acted by professionals in ths period shows that there were no significant differences in the staging requirements of

> the various companies and that the stage equipment was much simpler than had been thought (p. 2).

He reiterates the point later (p. 8) when discussing R. C. Bald's theories concerning two variants of Fletcher's The Woman's Prize, and he summarises his findings thus:

> The basic requirement for the performance of Shakespeare's plays is an unlocalized facade through which actors can enter and large properties can be brought on or thrust out. Some plays need a supplementary acting area above for a brief scene or two; others need an accessory space covered with doors or hangings for a brief scene or two; still others need a trap to the place below the stage. It should be remembered, however, that most plays did not require all of these facilities and that actors may have improvised according to the stage facilities available to them.[3]

The significance of the above quotations is that they all point to simplicity as the main characteristic of the Elizabethan stage.[4] The objection that they all deal with plays from late 1599 onwards while my period is earlier, is hardly valid in view of the conclusions I come to. If the later Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Caroline playhouses were simpler than was thought in the first half of this century then it is a reasonable inference that the earlier Elizabethan theatres were too. If they changed at all from 1576 to 1599, the change would surely have been in the direction of greater complexity rather than less. A. M. Nagler suggests that the Swan drawing (of about 1596) represents a rehearsal, which is the reason hangings are not shown, and that during an actual performance the two doors of the tiring-house would not be seen, being covered by a curtain which hung from the gallery and had three openings, one at each of the stage doors and one at the centre.[5] This not only supports the theory of simplicity, but also corroborates my ideas concerning the use of a

curtain.

Alfred Harbage studied "stage directions and implied action in eighty-six plays, including seventeen by Shakespeare--all those known to have been staged by particular companies using London amphitheatres between 1576, when the first was built, and 1608, when Shakespeare's company ceased using such structures exclusively, barring only such plays as were not printed within the same period."[6] He generalises about rules of staging thus:

> The suburbs of the Elizabethan stage have received more emphasis than the stage itself. The extent of the overemphasis is suggested by the following figures. In the eighty-six plays . . . forty-eight require no use of the gallery, thirty-nine no use of enclosure whether on or at the rear of the stage, and twenty-five no use of either gallery or enclosure. . . . In 1312 [of a total of 1463] scenes, the staging consisted of actors entering upon and leaving an open platform, either totally bare or equipped incidentally with a few seats, a table, a bed, a gibbet, a judgment bar, a raised throne, or the like. The exigencies of the fable dictated departures from the norm of simple platform playing.[7]

I have taken pains to show that there is considerable support for the kind of inferences I make about the Curtain between 1597 and 1599, since they may at first sight seem rather negative and uninteresting.

Analysis of the seven plays chosen for study reveals that no elaborate stage is required for their performance. A platform and tiring-house such as those depicted by De Witt in the Swan drawing are quite capable of accommodating all these plays, given only the simple addition of a curtain hung across the entire width of the tiring-house wall at some distance from it (say about two feet) so as to form a corridor. The curtain would be in four sections and could be drawn aside in three places--at each of the stage doors and at the

centre.[8]

The purpose of this curtain is manifold. It hides one or both stage doors when they are not needed, especially when their use would be a hindrance to the action (see, for example, above, pp. 73, 77-78, 105). It affords an extra entrance at the centre of the tiring-house wall, which in some scenes was the only one used (see above, pp. 59-60, 93-95, 100-04).[9] It provides an area for the concealment of characters and small properties (see above, pp. 81-82). And finally it allows for discoveries (see above, pp. 107-08). If, in addition, the top of the "corridor" formed by the curtain and the tiring-house wall were covered in any way, it could also serve as a "penthouse" (compare above, p. 98).

None of the plays require a special acting area on an upper level. When necessary the players could use the balcony above the tiring-house. Its use for acting is specifically designated only in Romeo and Juliet for two comparatively short scenes with only two actors. Both scenes can be presented at the front of the balcony, which may also have been used (for even briefer periods involving only one actor) in 2 Henry IV, I, i, and Henry V, III, iii (see above, pp. 88-89, 92). It is not otherwise required; and the deliberate avoidance of its use in Much Ado about Nothing (see above, pp. 99-100) strongly suggests that the balcony's main purpose was the accommodation of spectators, and the dramatist would not use it unless absolutely necessary.[10]

While none of this amounts to proof, it does suggest that the Curtain was a very simple theatre, at least from 1597 to 1599. But

there was versatility in its simplicity, for the stage, while representing nowhere in particular when empty of actors, could represent anywhere and everywhere when occupied. The identity it adopted for any one scene depended on the play being performed, the characters present, and the situation being acted out. When precise location was important and not made clear by the signals mentioned above, it was stated unambiguously in the dialogue, usually at the beginning of a scene (compare above, pp. 73, n., 85, 96-97). Properties were not used to show location. The use of large ones was in any case sparing and they served some dramatic function and were not merely for decoration (see above, pp. 84-85, 78-81).

The staging of the plays was therefore also simple, probably deliberately simplified. This would make sense on four counts. 1. Companies did not have much time (if any) for rehearsal. Plays did not enjoy extended runs as they do in modern theatre, an averagely successful play running to eight or nine performances.[11] 2. Companies were obliged, usually because of the plague outbreaks in the summer months, though occasionally for other reasons (see above, pp. 17, 19-20, 45), to go on frequent tours in the provinces. Their theatres on such tours would range from comfortable and spacious halls in great houses to open-air market crosses. 3. Even in London they performed in a variety of buildings--church halls, noble houses, inn-yards, and, of course, public playhouses. 4. Many of the theatres did not belong to the acting companies but to some "impresario" and the players could not be sure of a permanent home. Some theatres (for example, the Curtain itself) were erected on leased property and

the owner could not himself be certain of permanent occupancy (compare above, p. 45). Under such circumstances a play that required an elaborately constructed theatre would not be economically viable.[12]

We are therefore confronted with a Curtain playhouse which in 1597-99 gave the actors no more than the minimum basic equipment outlined above on pages 114-15. On such a stage all seven of the texts selected for this thesis can be adequately presented. Plays that appear rich and complex are quite capable of being acted on a comparatively simple stage. The complexity resides in the dialogue, characters, and plot, and not in the action or the structure of the theatre.

What conclusions can be drawn from this about the Elizabethan theatre, or even the Curtain, generally? If I heed the strictures of my own first chapter I should reply, "None." But some speculation may be in order.

Firstly we may assume that if the Curtain stage was altered in any way between the year of its inception and 1599, its acting facilities would have been improved rather than the reverse. Therefore we may conclude that it was at least as simple in 1577 as it was in 1599, and that for twenty-two years plays were presented on its bare platform. It was used for activities other than plays, especially fencing matches (see above, p. 14, n.), and a large open platform would obviously be an advantage.

Secondly, there is no evidence to suggest that the Curtain had been altered by 1625. It was still used for "activities other than plays" after 1623 (see above, p. 31). If, therefore, we postulate

that its minimal facilities were not added to during its long life, we are faced with the conclusion that the theatre Glynne Wickham thinks of as the archetypal Elizabethan playhouse remained for forty-eight years more "primitive" than anything yet reconstructed.

Lastly, when we remember the findings and opinions of the authorities quoted above (pp. 111-114), and recall that the Curtain was adequate for no less a company than Prince Charles's men as late as 1623, we are led to acknowledge that all public playhouses from 1576 to the start of the Civil War may well have been not much less "primitive" than the Curtain. Perhaps we should examine very carefully those plays and scenes which other scholars have asserted cannot be staged without the use of a permanent "discovery space," "inner stage," and "upper stage." It may be that many of the plays hitherto thought of as requiring these structures could have been performed on a stage as simple as the Curtain's appears to have been in 1597-99, and that the Swan drawing is, after all, much more accurate than anyone has yet given it credit for.

## NOTES

### Chapter 1

[1]E. K. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923), III, 50.

[2]Allardyce Nicoll, "Studies in the Elizabethan Stage since 1900," Shakespeare Survey, 1 (1948), 5.

[3]Bernard Beckerman, Shakespeare at the Globe 1599-1609 (New York: Macmillan, 1962); J. W. Saunders, "Staging at the Globe, 1599-1613," Shakespeare Quarterly, 11 (1960), 402-25; also in The Seventeenth Century Stage, ed. G. E. Bentley (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 235-68; T. J. King, "Staging of Plays at the Phoenix in Drury Lane," Theatre Notebook, Vol. 19, No. 4 (Summer 1965), 146-66; T. J. King, Shakespearean Staging, 1599-1642 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971).

[4]Glynne Wickham, Early English Stages 1300 to 1660: Volume Two 1576 to 1660, Part II (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 66-67.

### Chapter 2

[1]Glynne Wickham, op. cit., p. 68.

[2]J. Q. Adams, Shakespearian Playhouses (1917; rpt. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1960), pp. 75-76.

[3]John Stowe, A Survey of London, 1598-1603, ed. C. L. Kingsford (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1908), II, 73.

[4]John Aubrey, Brief Lives, ed. A. Clark (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1898), II, 12.

[5]J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare (1907; rpt. New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1966), p. 361.

[6]J. Q. Adams, op. cit., pp. 75, n., 80.

[7]Cited by Halliwell-Phillipps in Outlines, p. 362.

[8]Outlines, p. 363.

[9]Loc. cit.

[10]Lucyle Hook, "The Curtain," Shakespeare Quarterly, XIII (1962), 504.

[11]Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, II, 401-402.

[12]Sidney Fisher, The Theatre the Curtain & the Globe (Montreal: McGill University Library, 1964).

[13]Edward Arber, A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London; 1554-1640 A.D. (1876; rpt. New York: Peter Smith, 1950), II, 321.

[14]John Northbrooke, Spiritus est vicarius Christi in terra. A Treatise wherein Dicing, dauncing, etc. are reproved (1577), p. 85.

[15]T. W., A Sermo[n] preached at Pawles Crosse 3 Nov. 1577 (1578); cited in Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, IV, 197.

[16]J. R. Dasent, Acts of the Privy Council of England (1890-1907, New Series), IX, 338 and X, 4; cited in Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, IV, 276.

[17]John Stockwood, A sermon preached at Paules Crosse (1578), p. 23; cited in Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, IV, 200.

[18]Francis Thynne, Newes from the north, otherwise called the Conference between Simon Certain and Pierce Plowman (1579), sig. $F_4$ recto; cited in Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, IV, 202.

[19]Thomas Twyne, Physic against Fortune (1579), I, 30; cited in Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, IV, 202.

[20]Dasent, XI, 449; cited in Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, IV, 227.

[21]J. C. Jeaffreson, Middlesex County Records, II, xlvii; cited in Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, IV, 278-79.

[22]Dasent, XI, 445; cited in Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, IV, 280.

[23]Malone Society Collections, ed. W. W. Greg (London: The Malone Society, 1907), I, 46.

[24]John Field, A godly exhortation, by occasion of the late judgement of God at Parris garden (1583), sig. $C_{iii}$ verso.

[25]Phillip Stubbes, The Anatomie of Abuses (1583), sigs. Lvii verso-Lviii recto.

[26]Malone Society Collections, I, 63-64.

[27]Survey of London, I, 93.

[28]Outlines, pp. 375-76:

> "Richard Fletcher playd his schollers priz at the Curtyn in Holiwell the 25 daye of August at ij weapons, the longe sworde and the sword and buckeler," 1579 . . . "Vallentin Longe playd his schollers priz at the Curtyn in Holiwell the iiij. th day of February at two kynde of weapons, that is to say, the long sword and the sworde and buckeler," 1580-1 . . . "Andrew Bello playd his provostes priz at the Courten in Holiwell the tenth daye of Maye at the Curtyn in Holiwell at two weapons," 1582 . . . "Androwe Bello playd his provostes priz at the Courten in Holiwell the fiveth daye of July, and at thre weapons," 1582 . . . "John Harris playd his provostes priz at the Curtine in Holiwell the second day of September, 1582," an entry in the same manuscript, but cancelled as if it were incorrect . . . "Alexander Reyson playd his maisters prize the laste daye of Aprill, 1583, at the Curteyn in Hollywell, at iiij. kynde of weapons, that is to saye, the longe sworde, the back sworde, the sworde and buckler, and the staffe."

(I have omitted from this passage the references to fencing matches at the Theatre from 1578-85.)

[29]Malone Society Collections, eds. W. W. Greg and E. K. Chambers (London: The Malone Society, 1908), I, 163-68. All the quotations pertaining to this incident are from a letter of William Fleetwood, Recorder of London, to Lord Burghley, dated 18 June 1584.

[30]Loc. cit.

[31]Adams, Shakespearian Playhouses, pp. 78-79, 83-84. See also Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, II, 393.

[32]R. Williams, Anthony Babington's Complaint (n.d.); cited by Halliwell-Phillipps, Outlines, p. 371, from MS. Arundel 418.

[33]William Rankins, The Mirrour of Monsters: wherein is described the vices caused by sight of playes (1587), sig. $B_{iiij}$ verso.

[34]Marphoreus, Martins months Minde, that is a certaine reporte of the death and funeralls [sic] of olde Martin Marreprelate, the great makebate of England (1589, attributed to Nashe), sig. $F_1$.

[35]W. W. Greg, Dramatic Documents from the Elizabethan Playhouses (1931; rpt. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1969), I, 16-19.

[36]Dasent, XXII, 549; cited in Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, IV, 310-11.

[37]Translated from Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, II, 360.

[38]Translated from Chambers, op. cit., II, 362.

[39]Malone Society Collections (1907), I, 76-78.

[40]In the 1596 edition of The Perambulation of Kent, William Lambarde mentions "Parisgardein, the Bell Savage, or Theatre" (p. 233, sig. $D_2$), but omits any reference to the Curtain. This may or may not be corroborative evidence for my conjecture, since we cannot be certain when Lambarde altered the passage from the original edition of 1576, in which it reads: "Parisgardein, the Bell Savage, or some other suche common place" (p. 187, sig. $Aa_{ij}$). It may have been in 1576 or early 1577, after the Theatre, but before the Curtain, was built. It should also be remembered that all the theatres were closed from 1592 to 1594 because of the plague.

[41]Malone Society Collections (1907), I, 79.

[42]Dasent, XXVII, 313; cited in Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, IV, 322-23.

[43]Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, II, 398-99.

[44]Ibid., II, 196.

[45]A. H. Bullen, ed., The Works of John Marston (London: John C. Nimmo, 1887), III, 372-73, Satire xi, ll. 37-45. In the same satire, in a passage on the popularity of fencing matches, Marston refers to the "Burgonian's ward" (l. 63). In a footnote (pp. 373-74) Bullen says that this is probably an allusion to a Burgundian fencer who was killed in 1467. However, in view of the date of entry into the Stationers' Register of The Scourge of Villainy (8 September 1598; Arber, III, 125),

it seems more likely that it alludes, as does Skialetheia (see p. 20 note 46 below), to John Barrose.

[46]Everard Guilpin, Skialetheia or A Shadow of Truth in Certain Epigrams and Satyres 1598, ed. D. Allen Carroll (Chappell Hill: University of Carolina Press, 1974), pp. 84 (sig. $D_6$), 82-83 (sig. $D_4$ verso); satire v, ll. 83-85, 27-30.

[47]Aubrey, Brief Lives (1898), II, 12.

[48]See below, pp. 54-55.

[49]Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, II, 197.

[50]Aubrey (loc. cit.) also says that Jonson killed Marlowe "on Bunhill, comeing from the Green-Curtain play-house." Either Aubrey himself or his authority for the information (Sir Edward Shirburn) was somewhat muddled here. It is clear that Aubrey is not to be trusted without corroboration.

[51]John Stowe, A Survey of London, 1598-1603, ed. C. L. Kingsford (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1908), II, 73, 262.

[52]Ibid., I, 93; II, 236.

[53]Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, II, 365.

[54]Early English Stages, Vol. II, Part 2, pp. 9-29 (especially 9-11).

[55]M. C. Bradbrook, "The Status Seekers: Society and the Common Player in the Reign of Elizabethan I," The Seventeenth Century Stage, ed. G. E. Bentley (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 60.

[56]Jeaffreson, I, 259; cited in Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, II, 403.

[57]Malone Society Collections (1907), I, 82.

[58]There is, for example, an intriguing hiatus in Alleyn's dramatic career between 1597 and 1600. In 1597 he "loosened his connexion" with the Admiral's men. By 29 December he had "'leafte [p]laynge' . . . and apparently retired for a time from active participation in . . . the company" (Greg, Dramatic Documents, I, 25, 32. See also, ibid., I, 36, n., 39; Henslowe's Diary, fol. 43). He resumed theatrical activity in 1600 with the Fortune project. It is merely fanciful conjecture to be sure, but is it not possible that in 1597 he decided to branch out on his

own, and that sometime between then and 1600 he acquired control of the Curtain? This would explain why he was able to assure Edmund Tylney that it would be torn down or converted to another use.

[59]Dasent, XXXI, 346; cited in Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, IV, 332.

[60]Dasent, XXXII, 466; cited in Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, IV, 333.

[61]Malone Society Collections (1907), I, 83-86.

[62]Malone Society Collections, ed. W. W. Greg (London: The Malone Society, 1909), I, 265-66.

[63]W. W. Greg, Henslowe Papers: Being Documents Supplementary to Henslowe's Diary (London: A. H. Bullen, 1907), p. 61.

[64]Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, II, 40.

[65]Arber, III, 354.

[66]A. H. Bullen, ed., The Works of John Day (1881; rpt. London: Holland, 1963), p. 317.

[67]Halliwell-Phillipps, Outlines, p. 371.

[68]Malone Society Collections (1909), I, 270.

[69]John Heath, Two centuries of epigrammes (1610), Epigram 39, sig. $E_3$.

[70]A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave, A Short Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, & Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad 1475-1640 (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1946), STC no. 24350. Chambers quotes these lines but gives the date of the poem as 1662, adding, "but this cannot be dated" (Elizabethan Stage, II, 369, n.). I have not been able to ascertain why Chambers dates it as late as 1662, unless it is a misprint for 1612.

[71]W. Turner, Turners dish of lentten stuffe or a galymaufery (1612?); cited by Chambers (see above, note 70).

[72]George Wither, Abuses Stript and Whipt (1613), pp. 24 (sig. $C_4$ verso), 224 (sig. $P_8$ verso).

[73]Review of English Studies (1925), I, 186. This dates the letter only as sometime between 1611 and 1615. The precise date is given in the Archivio Mediceo, filza 4190, fol. 391 verso, in the Archivio di Stato, Florence, as 22 August 1613 new style (12 August in the old style then in use in England).
(I am indebted to Prof. John Orrell for this information.)

[74]It corroborates Beckerman's contention that the companies performed many different plays in a short time and had to be prepared to put a play on the boards at short notice (as, for example, with a revival) with little or no rehearsal. See Shakespeare at the Globe 1599-1609 (1962), Chapter One.

[75]This worlds folly. by I. H. (1615), sigs. $B_1$ verso-$B_2$ recto.

[76]Arber, III, 566.

[77]The Hector of Germany, or the Palsgrave prime elector. A new play (1615).

[78]Malone Society Collections, eds. David Cook and F. P. Wilson (London: The Malone Society, 1961), VI, 148.

[79]Loc. cit.

[80]Leslie Hotson, The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1928), p. 15.

[81]Sister M. Jean Carmel Cavanaugh, "Technogamia" by Barten Holyday: A Critical Edition (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1942), p. xxxv. According to Sister Cavanaugh this poem is taken from a manuscript Commonplace Book in the Folger Shakespeare Library (Folger MS. 452.5, fols. 140-42) and is by Peter Heylyn. The poem is entitled "A Satyr made against Mr Holydayes Technogana [sic] or rather Technobigamia, presented before ye kings matie at woodstock on friday 26 of Aug: 1621 by the students of Christchurch" (p. xxxi). Intriguingly similar to the first line cited of the Heylyn poem is a line given by Halliwell-Phillipps (Outlines, p. 371) from a poem "of the time of James I. in MS. Harl. 2127,--'Friske to the Globe or Curtaine with your trull.'"

[82]Wm. Chappell, ed., The Roxburghe Ballads (1872; rpt. New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1966), II, 256.

[83]John Tucker Murray, English Dramatic Companies 1558-1642 (London: Constable and Company, 1910), II, 193, and I, 238, 239, n.

[84]Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, II, 551-52, has this to say about jigs:

> We do know that the dance by way of afterpiece was a regular and enduring custom. It was known as the jig. At first, perhaps, nothing more than such dancing, with the help of a variety of foreign costumes, as was also an element in the early masks, it developed into a farcical dialogue, with a musical and Terpsichorean accompaniment, for which popular tunes, such as Fading, were utilized. . . . in the last decade of the sixteenth century the jig may be inferred from the Stationers' Register to have become almost a literary type. . . . The Middlesex justices made a special order against the lewd jigs, songs, and dances at the Fortune in 1612.

In an account of a performance at the Curtain in 1599, Thomas Platter says that the play was followed by dancing (Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, II, 365).

[85]Edmund Malone, The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare, with the Corrections and Illustrations of Various Commentators (1821; rpt. New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1966), III, 57-59.

[86]Joseph Quincy Adams, ed., The Dramatic Records of Sir Henry Herbert (New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1964), p. 24.

[87]Gerald Eades Bentley, The Jacobean and Caroline Stage (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1956), V, 1324.

[88]Adams, Dramatic Records, pp. 24-25.

[89]Adams, op. cit., p. 24. A similar entry in Herbert's manuscript office book (now lost) is recorded in Halliwell-Phillipps Scrapbooks, Fortune, p. 85:

> A Tragedy of the Plantation of Virginia, the [prophaneness left out] contayninge 16 sheets & one May be acted [els not for the] companye at the Curtune Found fault with the length of this playe & commanded a reformation in all their other playes. [Cited by Bentley, J&CS, VI, 137, and V, 1396.)

[90]Jack Dawe (pseudonym), Vox graculi, or Iacke Dawes prognostication for the elevation of all vanity, etc. For this year 1623 (1623?), sigs. $I_1$ verso-$I_2$ recto. I checked this passage in the original and also read other extracts at random, for it seemed to me possible that the author was prophesying things that were unlikely to happen. It turned out,

however, that he was prognosticating things which were certain to happen, and of which he disapproved or about which he was indignant. The following is a brief sample of his tone:

> fruit will be eaten by caterpillars (p. 2, sig. $A_4$ recto);
> Iustice and Gentrie shall connive with each other, and coine shall out-countenance the iustest cause (p. 4, sig. $B_1$ recto);
> Some children shall be borne, that when they come to age, shall not know their own fathers (p. 5, sig. $B_2$ recto);
> Such as have no fire shall feel most cold (p. 13, sig. $C_2$ recto).

Thus we may take it that there were sure to be large audiences at both the Red Bull and the Curtain in 1623.

[91]Bentley, J&CS, VI, 137-38.

[92]Hotson, C&RS, p. 92.

[93]Hotson, op. cit., pp. 92, 129, n.

[94]Lucyle Hook, "The Curtain," Shakespeare Quarterly (1962), XIII, 499-504.

[95]Calendar of Treasury Books (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1933), XIII, 185, 308-18.

[96]Wickham (Early English Stages, II, 2, 54) cites a passage about the early bull-ring in Southwark, which was replaced by the one near the Bankside bear-baiting arena. The passage is dated 1561, by which time that early bull-ring must have disappeared:

> all those fourtene tenements or cotages and gardeyns commonly called the Bulryng, sett, lying, and beyng on the strete syde, by the alley called the Bullryng, in the Parishe of St. George, in Southwark.

In its use of the term "bulryng" this extract obviously parallels the use of "Curtain Playhouse" in the Calendar of Treasury Books and probably in the reference Hotson found too. It reminded me of the Bullring in Birmingham, England, which was an open-air market in my youth, and is now a modern shopping precinct. Its connection with bulls, even when I was a child, was very remote, but it still retains its old name. It is not valid to assume that the name by itself means the object it seems to mean. This point is, of course, true also of the original name of the Curtain theatre, which had nothing to do with theatrical curtains (see above, p. 5).

[97]J. P. Collier, ed., The Works of Shakespeare (London, 1844), I, ccxli-lii; cited by Lucyle Hook, SQ, XIII, 502.

[98]Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, II, 374-75.

[99]Lucyle Hook (SQ, XIII, 502, n.) says that the Stow volume is now in the Folger Library, "where the possibility has recently been suggested that the manuscript is a Collier forgery." As Richard D. Altick wrote in The Scholar Adventurers (New York: The Free Press, 1966):

> We cannot afford to take on faith any of his [Collier's] accounts of provenance. Therefore, whether one works with Collier's printed volumes or with original materials he is known to have had the chance to befoul, one must always be on guard (p. 159).

Yet, as Altick also points out (p. 154), "there is an ever-present danger of blaming Collier for more crimes than he committed."

[100]William Prynne, Histriomastix (1633), fol. *3 verso.

[101]Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, II, 374. Prynne has these two marginal notes opposite the asterisks in the text: "The Fortune and Red Bull," and "White Friers Playhouse." Chambers's identification of the six theatres may not be completely accurate, but this would not affect the main point of the argument that the Curtain is certainly not among them.

[102]Bentley, JCS, II, 688. The theatres named are: the Black-friars, the Phoenix, the Red Bull, the Fortune, and Salisbury Court.

[103]JCS, VI, 138.

[104]CRS, p. 92.

[105]Sir Walter Besant, The Survey of London Volume IX: London North of the Thames (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1911), p. 592.

Chapter 3

[1]Leslie Hotson, Shakespeare's Wooden O (London: Rupert Hart Davis, 1959), p. 308.

[2]Ida Darlington and James Howgego, Printed Maps of London circa 1553-1850 (London: George Philip & Son Limited, 1964), p. 10.

[3]Sidney Fisher, The Theatre the Curtain & the Globe (Montreal: McGill University Library, 1964), p. 2.

[4]Loc. cit.

[5]Fisher, p. 4.

[6]Sir Walter Besant, The Survey of London Volume IX: London North of the Thames (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1911), p. 591.

[7]Fisher, p. 4.

[8]Darlington and Howgego, Printed Maps of London, p. 10. There are other small points one can criticise in Fisher. He says that the view spans 92° in the horizontal plane and 5° in the vertical, and that these are "'natural' dimensions for a view." He continues: This point is important, because the logical deduction from it is that we would expect a high degree of accuracy in the Utrecht view, higher than that of Hollar, for example" (p. 3). It seems to me to reveal a rather naive approach to drawing to argue that a single fixed observation point, because it is "natural," would result in a more accurate rendition of a particular landscape than several observations and sketches from different places. And when one compares the quality of engraving in this view with that in any one of Hollar's, Fisher's statement becomes almost ludicrous. He also suggests elsewhere in his booklet (p. 7), basing his ideas on the fact that the "Ryther" map of 1633 or later (see above, p. 40) shows the Fortune (probably the second one) as hexagonal, that the first Fortune, contrary to the specific instructions of the contract for its construction, may not have been a square building. In connection with the Globe he points out that a map of London in 1667 after the Great Fire by Hollar shows the Globe as still standing. Had he bothered to check Hind, he would have discovered that the "survey" on which this map was supposedly based was probably never carried out, and its reliability as topographical evidence is very suspect. (See Arthur M. Hind, Wenceslaus Hollar and his Views of London and Windsor in the Seventeenth Century (London: John Lane The Bodley Head Limited, 1922), pp. 16-17, 39-40. While only one of these points directly involves the Curtain, they serve to undermine one's belief in Fisher's general reliability.

[9]Shakespeare's Wooden O, p. 305.

[10]See Darlington and Howgego, Printed Maps of London, p. 20.
See also: Raymond Lister, Antique Maps and their Cartographers (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1970), p. 59; P. J. Radford, Antique Maps (London: Garnstone Press, 1971), pp. 21-22, under "Christopher Saxton"; R. V. Tooley, Maps and Map-Makers (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1952), pp. 51, 65, 127.

[11]Cf. Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, II, 402, n.

[12]To go beyond the very elementary assumptions about the structure of the building that I have made here (whether for the Curtain or any other Elizabethan theatre) is to enter into controversy and dubious speculation. Cartographical evidence concerning the other theatres, while much more abundant than that for the Curtain, is contradictory and unreliable (see I. A. Shapiro, "The Bankside Theatres: Early Engravings," Shakespeare Survey, I (1948), 25-35, and "An Original Drawing of the Globe Theatre," Shakespeare Survey, 2 (1949), 21-23); other pictorial evidence is scant and uncertain; and the written evidence, while it basically concurs, is open to a variety of interpretations.

## Chapter 4

[1]John Tucker Murray, English Dramatic Companies 1558-1642 (London: Constable and Company, 1910), I, 94. See also Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, II, 196.

[2]Murray, I, 94; Chambers, op. cit., II, 195, n.

[3]Chambers, op. cit., II, 384.

[4]Dasent, XXVII, 313; cited in Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, IV, 323.

[5]Murray, I, 96-97. See also Chambers, op. cit., II, 196; W. W. Greg, ed., Henslowe's Diary, pp. 54, 82; Wickham, Early English Stages, II, 2, 11.

[6]See above, p. 20.

[7]See below, pp. 54-55.

[8]See above, p. 20.

[9]See below, p. 55.

[10]Chambers, op. cit., II, 203, 403. (In the 1605 edition of his work Armin changed his title to "clonnico del Mondo.")

[11]Murray, I, 96. See also Chambers, op. cit., II, 403.

[12]Bentley, JCS, II, 651.

[13]See above, pp. 33-34; also Bentley, JCS, II, 632, and VI, 138.

[14]Murray, I, 97. See also Chambers, op. cit., II, 399.

[15]The material for the provenance and date of the texts is based mainly on several of the most widely recognised authorities in the bibliographical field, and except for possibly contentious views, I shall not give detailed references for my assertions, which reflect in the main the consensus of opinion concerning the texts. For further details the reader is referred to the following works, within which the relevant sections on each of the plays can be easily located: E. K. Chambers, William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems, Volume I (1930; rpt. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1966); W. W. Greg, The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1951); H. R. Hoppe, The bad quarto of Romeo and Juliet; a bibliographical and textual study (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1948); James G. McManaway, "Recent Studies in Shakespeare's Chronology," Shakespeare Survey, 3 (1959), 22-33; A. W. Pollard, Shakespeare Quartos and Folios (London: Methuen and Company, 1909); Percy Simpson, "The Bibliographical Study of Shakespeare," Oxford Bibliographical Society Proceedings and Papers (1923; rpt. Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1969).

[16]H. R. Hoppe, "The First Quarto Version of Romeo and Juliet, II, vi and IV, v. 43 ff." Review of English Studies, 14 (1938), 275.

[17]Pollard, op. cit., pp. 24, 69. As far as I am aware, no use has previously been made of this phenomenon in studies of the staging of Romeo and Juliet, though it seems crucial to the second balcony scene (see below, p. 69).

[18]This is the generally accepted opinion, though Dover Wilson ("The New Way with Shakespeare's Texts II. Recent Work on the Text of Romeo and Juliet," Shakespeare Survey, 8 (1955), 81-99) puts forward a strong argument that Q2 was set up from a copy of Q1 corrected and supplemented "by a scribe who was given access to the foul papers of the theatre." The argument does not materially affect the authority of Q2.

[19]Murray, English Dramatic Companies (1910), I, 94-95.

[20]Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, IV, 34-35.

[21]Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, IV, 36.

[22]In addition to the works cited in note 1 of this chapter see also: Charlton Hinman, Henry IV, Part One, 1598 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1966), pp. viii-xi; A. R. Humphreys, ed., King Henry IV, Part I (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1966), pp. xi-xxi, lxvi-lxxv.

[23]Charlton Hinman, op. cit., p. ix.

[24]G. B. Harrison, The Life and Death of Robert Devereux Earl of Essex (New York: Henry Holt, 1937), pp. 211-48.

[25]Line references are to A. R. Humphreys, ed., The Second Part of King Henry IV (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1967).

[26]Arber, III, 105.

[27]Pistol's "Cannibal" for "Hannibal" (II, iv, 163) is echoed by Jonson at III, iv, 53. Pistol's swaggering and braggadoccio are generally similar to Bobadilla's. References to technical military and fencing terms in a pretense at knowledge not actually possessed are made by Shallow at III, ii, 275-81, and by Bobadilla in several places, and there are comic fencing scenes in both plays (Henry IV, 2, II, iv; Every Man In, I, iii, and IV, ii). Falstaff's "Empty the jordan" (II, iv, 33) may be echoed in Bobadilla's "Take away the bason, good hostess" (I, iii, 90).

[28]William Shakespeare, I, 153.

[29]Much Ado About Nothing 1600 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1971), p. xvi.

[30]Op. cit., p. 68.

[31]Chambers, William Shakespeare, I, 387.

[32]Arber, III, 37.

[33]Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, III, 360.

[34]Arber, III, 169.

[35]Pollard, op. cit., p. 68.

[36]J. W. Lever, ed., Every Man in His Humour: A Parallel-Text Edition of the 1601 Quarto and the 1616 Folio (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1971), p. xxvii.

[37]References are to the edition by J. W. Lever. See above, n. 36.

[38]Claude J. Summers, Every Man in His Humour 1601 (Menston, Yorkshire: The Scholar Press, 1972), prefatory note. See also J. W. Lever, op. cit., p. xi, and Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, III, 359.

[39]J. W. Lever, ed., op. cit., p. xi.

## Chapter 5

[1]There has been controversy over this drawing concerning its accuracy and reliability. It appears to conflict with some of the written evidence regarding theatre construction. However, Chambers' verdict still seems to me the most sensible one:

> The Swan drawing is our one contemporary picture of the interior of a public play-house, and it is a dangerous business to explain away its evidence by an assumption of inaccurate observation on the part of De Witt, merely because that evidence conflicts with the subjective interpretations of stage-directions, arrived at in the course of the pursuit of a "typical" stage. Still less can it be discredited on the ground that it was merely made by Van Buchell on "hearsay evidence" from the instructions of De Witt. It is a copy, like the accompanying description on the same piece of paper, of De Witt's original, which De Witt says he drew ("adpinxi") in order to bring out an analogy which had struck him between the English and the Roman theatres. . . . With all its faults, the drawing is the inevitable basis of any comprehensive account of the main structural features of a play-house (Elizabethan Stage, II, 526-27).

None of the evidence (admittedly meagre) that I have so far presented for the structure of the Curtain contradicts the Swan drawing. It is therefore reasonable to start from it and see whether any of its details conflict with evidence from the plays themselves. If so, we shall have to abandon it.

[2]References to Q2 are to Romeo and Juliet: Second Quarto, 1599 (London: The Shakespeare Association & Sidgwick and Jackson, Limited, 1949). References to Q1 are to H. H. Furness, ed., A New Variorium Edition of Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet (1871; rpt. New York: American Scholar, 1963), pp. 303-64.

In neither of the above editions are stage-directions given line numbers. When referring to stage-directions, therefore, I have given the number of the preceding line, unless that line is on the previous page, or the direction opens a scene. In the former case I have given the number of the line following, and in the latter the same, or the information that the stage-direction begins the scene.

[3]An alternative method of acting this scene would be to assume that Romeo has already turned back when he comes on stage. He could then exit at the opposite side of the stage. Benvolio and Mercutio, following him, search a while, and when they do not find him, return the way they came. Romeo then re-enters on the "other side" of the wall.

[4]Although the Swan drawing does not show any curtains, there is evidence that the Swan had them in 1602, and that they were common in other playhouses:

> We know that even the Swan was not altogether undraped in 1602, for during the riot which followed the "counsening prancke" of England's Joy in that year the audience are said to have "revenged themselves upon the hangings, curtains, chairs, stooles, walles, and whatsoever came in their way". . . . Apart, however, from the Swan, there is abundant evidence for the use of some kind of stage hangings in the public theatres of the sixteenth century generally (Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, III, 78-79).

I envisage the curtains hung along the tiring-house facade as capable of being drawn back to reveal the stage doors when these are needed for the action. (See further, Chambers, op. cit., III, 80-81.)

[5]Henslowe mentions the following: "J tombe," and "j tome of Guido, j tome of Dido." See W. W. Greg, ed., Henslowe Papers: Being Documents Supplementary to Henslowe's Diary (London: A. H. Bullen, 1907), p. 116. The tomb might resemble that of Sir Thomas Gresham in Great St. Helen's, Bishopsgate. See Eric Mercer, English Art 1552-1625, Oxford History of English Art (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1962), Plate 82.

[6]Richard Hosley, "The Use of the Upper Stage in Romeo and Juliet," Shakespeare Quarterly, 5 (1954), 371-79.

[7]Hosley, op. cit., 374-75, text and note.

[8]J. C. Adams, "Shakespeare's Use of the Upper Stage in Romeo and Juliet, III.v," Shakespeare Quarterly, 7 (1956), 147.

[9]Even assuming that the existence of these in the Globe had been proven beyond doubt, we have no evidence concerning them in the Curtain.

[10]Chambers is of the opinion that the Swan drawing shows spectators in the gallery over the stage. He comments thus:

> However this may be, let us recall what has already been established in an earlier chapter, that there is conclusive evidence for some use of the space above the stage for spectators, at least until the end of the sixteenth century, and for some use of it as a music-room, at least during the seventeenth century. With these uses we have to reconcile the equally clear indications that this region, or some part of it, was available when needed, throughout the whole of the period under our consideration, as a field for dramatic action (Elizabethan Stage, III, 90-91).

[11]III, v, 40-41, "[Nurse.] The day is broke, be wary, looke about./ Iuli. Then window let day in, and let life out."

[12]Either the Mother or Juliet could enter first for this scene. If Juliet enters first, then the Mother calls from off stage. If the Mother enters first, Juliet enters as a result of her call, speaking her first line either off stage or as she enters. This line is in any case a "cover" since she is very well aware who is calling. The rest of her short speech--"It is my Lady Mother. / Is she not downe so late or up so early? / What unaccustomed cause procures her hither?" (ll. 66-68)--then becomes an aside instead of a soliloquy. (In line 67 may Shakespeare be indulging in a quibble on the fact that a scene which began on the balcony is now continuing on the main stage?)

[13]In the recent Edmonton Citadel production of the play (October-November, 1976) the rope was used only as a "decorative" property. The Nurse duly carried it on in III, ii, but it did not appear at all in III, v. Romeo left the upper-level acting area (in this case a temporary structure) by half-sliding, half-dropping down a pillar. The descent was simple, quick, and quite graceful. If the height of the second gallery of the Curtain approximated that of the Fortune (twelve feet), the drop for an agile actor with arms extended would not be too hazardous.

[14]Compare above, note 11.

[15]See Hosley, op. cit., 376-79.

[16]Quotations from this play are taken from John S. Farmer, ed., The Tudor Facsimile Texts: Mucedorus 1598 (1910; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1970). The play is not divided into acts or scenes, nor are the lines numbered. References are therefore indicated by signature only. Readers should not find it difficult to locate specific lines.

[17]"These lucklesse woods" (sig. $A_4$); "within these woods" (sigs. $C_1$, $D_4$, $E_3$ verso); "Bre. Amadine, how like you Bremo and his woodes?" (sig. E1 verso).

[18]In the 1610 edition of the play the stage directions make it apparent that the bear does appear, and he chases Mouse the Clown off the stage. Here the stage direction is equivalent to "Exit pursued by a bear," which is totally different from "Enter . . . being persued with abeare." This sequence of events is not included in the 1598 edition. (Cf. below, note 19 to this chapter.)

[19]The title-page of the 1610 edition states that the text is "Amplified with new additions, as it was acted before the Kings Maiestie at White-hall on Shrove-sunday night." (This was the revival by the King's men referred to above, see p. 49.) The amplifications certainly improve the play, greatly clarifying the motivation of the plot. There are more characters, including a "confidant" for Mucedorus, and his father the King of Valencia, and three additional scenes--one at the beginning of the play containing business with Mouse and the bear (see above, note 18 to this chapter), and two set in the court of Valencia. All the extra material points to the fact that the King's men in 1610 were better equipped than the company (whichever it was) for which the play was originally written.

[20]The text used was Henry the Fourth Part I 1598 (Shakespeare Quarto Facsimile No. 14; Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1966). The line-numbering for the above text has been taken over from the Globe edition (1891). "Each number has been placed opposite the line of the Quarto that contains the last word (or portion of a word, or corresponding word) of the line so counted in the Globe edition" (p. vii). Readers should find it easy to locate quotations in any standard edition.

[21]Evidence for rushes on the stage can be found in Thomas Dekker, The Guls Horne-Booke 1609 (Menston, England: The Scolar Press Limited, 1969):

> On the very Rushes where the Commedy is to daunce . . . must our fethered Estridge . . . be planted (p. 28, sig. $E_2$ verso). Salute all your gentle acquaintance, that are spred either on the rushes, or on stooles about you (p. 31, sig. $E_4$). Take up a rush, and tickle the earnest eares of your fellow gallants (p. 30 [sic, =32], sig. $E_4$ verso).

[22]An arras was "a rich tapestry fabric, in which figures and scenes [were] woven in colours . . . formerly placed [hung] round the walls of household apartments, often at such a distance from them as to allow of people being concealed in the space between" (OED). The purpose of the hanging was no doubt partly to conceal bare walls and partly to exclude draughts.

Whether or not any distinction was made in reality between "arras," "hanging(s)," and "curtain(s)," I do not think the terms would be differentiated in the theatre, where material hung along the tiring-house wall could, like many other parts of the playhouse, take on any reasonable designation which the dramatist wished to give it. "By far the most common term is 'curtain,' but I do not think that there is any technical difference between 'curtain' and the not infrequent 'arras' or the unique 'veil' of The Death of Robin Hood" (Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, III, 80).

[23]Quotations from this play are taken from the first quarto, The Second part of Henrie the fourth (1600). The original spelling has been adhered to, although act, scene, and line references are to the Arden Shakespeare, edited by A. R. Humphreys (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1967).

[24]It would be possible to play both of these scenes without any visible doors. In IV, v, for example, an actor could look through a gap in the curtains before speaking this line, and the audience then envisages the door as behind the hangings. 2 Henry IV thus becomes almost as "portable" as Mucedorus (see above, pp. 76-77).

[25]The stage-direction in Q1 reads: "Enter antient Pistol, and Bardolfes boy" (sig. $D_4$). Since there is no reason for Bardolph's boy to be with Pistol and Bardolph speaks a little later in the scene without any entrance being marked for him elsewhere, it is clear that the omission of his name here is an error, and that he must enter with Pistol.

[26]After I had reached these conclusions independently I came across the following passage in Chambers:

> In . . . 2 Hen. IV, IV. iv, v (a continuous scene divided, with unanimity in ill-doing by modern editors in the middle of a speech), the King says (IV. iv. 131), "Beare me hence Into some other chamber", Warwick (IV. iv. 4), "Call for the Musick in the other Roome", and the King "Set me the Crowne upon my Pillow here". The Prince enters and the Lords go to "the other roome" (Elizabethan Stage, III, 65, n.).

[27]Quotations are taken from Henry the Fifth 1600 (Shakespeare Quarto Facsimiles No. 9; Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1957). In a preface to this edition W. W. Greg says that the acts and scenes "have . . . been marked according to the usual divisions and marginal references have been

added to the lines of the Globe edition (1891) where there is any correspondence." However, as Greg also points out, "References to the Quarto can best be made by pages (signatures) and type-lines," and he notes that "to facilitate this a star had been placed in the margin opposite every tenth line on each page (excluding the head and running titles) and a dot opposite each intervening fifth" (p. vii). I have followed Greg's advice.

[28]III, vii; IV, i, iii, vi-viii; V, i.

[29]Thomas Platter, visiting an unnamed theatre which must have been the Curtain in the autumn of 1599 (see above, p. 22), describes an unidentified play which he saw there. His description includes this sentence: "Meanwhile the Englishman went into the tent, robbed the German of his gains, and thus he outwitted the German also" (cited in Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, II, 365).

[30]Quotations are taken from Much Ado About Nothing (Shakespeare Quarto Facsimiles No. 15; Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1971). A through-line-numbering system has been used in this edition, in the margin. However, to permit identification and reference by act, scene, and line, the appropriate Globe designators have been supplied at the foot of each quarto page, and the act-scene numbers have also been set at the top of each page in the outer margin. I have referred to quotations by these act, scene, and line numbers, though the line numbers have had to be estimated. It should not be difficult to locate quotations in the edition used, or for that matter in any standard text.

[31]The use of a mere facade to represent the tomb might have symbolic significance for the audience, for they know that Hero is really alive, and the "pretence" at a tomb would parallel the pretence of her death.

[32]This raises the whole question of whether objects mentioned in the dialogue were actually employed in the production of the play. There are two extreme approaches to the problem: 1. Everything mentioned refers to some real entity, either a property, or a part of the playhouse structure; 2. Nothing mentioned refers at all to anything visible to the audience. Those who hold the latter position would argue that since an author goes to so much trouble to describe a scene in words, it is unlikely that that scene was represented visually. I do not think that there can be any general answer to the question, though I incline to the latter view. Each particular instance must be examined on its own merits.

I have worked from the premise that unless an object or architectural feature (e.g., "walls," "tower") can be shown to have been used in production we must assume its absence. In any case, even if one believes in a more frequent use of properties in the Elizabethan theatre than is generally accepted, such use would not affect the physical structure of the stage and tiring-house.

[33]Quotations from this play are taken from Every Man in His Humour 1601 (Menston, Yorkshire: The Scolar Press, 1972). Act, Scene, and line references are to J. W. Lever, ed., Every Man in His Humour: A Parallel-Text Edition of the 1601 Quarto and the 1616 Folio (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1971). Readers should be able to locate quotations in any standard text.

[34]Cf. R. Hosley, "The Origins of the Shakespearean Playhouse," Shakespeare 400, ed., James G. McManaway (New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Toronto, and London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1964), pp. 29-39. Hosley argues for the hall-screen as the origin of the tiring-house wall. The screen usually had two (sometimes only one, and sometimes three) openings, and might "conceal as many as five doors" (p. 32), which gave access to other parts of the house. If his argument be valid, it lends support to my notion that some scenes were played so as to suggest several means of access to and from the area immediately behind the actual exit from the stage.

[35]Bobadilla also calls for "a cup of your small beere sweet hostess" (l. 84), and for "another bedstaffe" (l. 186), and requests Tib to take away the "bason" (l. 90). Although exits and entrances are marked for Tib for none of these tasks, it is clear that she carries them out. She obviously remains off stage except when called by Bobadilla, and leaves again when his requests have been fulfilled.

[36]Cf. G. F. Reynolds, The Staging of Elizabethan Plays at the Red Bull Theater 1605-1625 (New York: Modern Language Association of America, and London: Oxford University Press, 1940), pp. 56, 65.

Chapter 6.

[1]"Staging at the Globe," The Seventeenth Century Stage, ed. G. E. Bentley (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 236.

[2]"Staging of Plays at the Phoenix in Drury Lane, 1617-42," Theatre Notebook, Vol. 19, No. 4, 146-66.

[3]T. J. King, "Shakespearean Staging, 1599-1642," Elizabethan Theatre III, ed. David Galloway (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1973), p. 13.

[4]I use "Elizabethan" here to cover playhouses from 1576 to 1642.

[5]Shakespeare's Stage (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), p. 53.

[6]Theatre for Shakespeare (Toronto: University of Toronto Press,

1955), p. 24.

[7]Op. cit., pp. 31-32.

[8]It would be possible to improvise entrances round the ends of the curtain. The stage would then have five entrances, though only two stage doors.

[9]In connection with my theory concerning the single "general" exit/entrance and its advantages in some scenes I quote this passage from G. F. Reynolds, Plays at the Red Bull (1940), pp. 191-92:

> One of the principal points an Elizabethan playwright attended to was the significance of his doors. Keeping that significance clear to his audience was only part of the larger problem, not especially concerned with the stage, of always making sure that the audience had in its mind at each succeeding point in the play just the information it needed to understand the story.

[10]Compare above, pp. 68-69, text and note.

[11]See Beckerman, op. cit., pp. 1-23. He justifies his chapter on the repertory thus:

> I have dealt with the repertory system at length because insufficient attention has been paid to it. In reconstructing the staging of any company, the character of this system cannot be ignored. For the Globe company as well as for the other companies, the staging of plays was conditioned by the irregular alternation of plays, the large number of plays that had to be ready for performance at one time, the rapidity with which new ones were added to the repertory, the probability of revivals, and the reliance upon the public playhouse for theatrical well-being. Allowance for these conditions must be made in any discussion of the play, the stage, and the actor (p. 23).

[12]Beckerman points out (pp. 21-23) that the players were more dependent on the paying public than their Court receipts for economic survival:

> But throughout the decade we are considering [1599-1609], the actors depended on the pence of a large, heterogeneous public more than upon the bounty of their prince (pp. 22-23).

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